

*At the beginning of 2016, the TSA can look back on another successful year of innovation and enterprise...*

*Giles Scott-Smith,  
Chair*

TSA



### Chair's Report

GILES SCOTT-SMITH

New Directions:  
Middelburg to Plymouth

1

### Guest Article

ALISON HOLMES

The 'gentle rain' of  
Specialness: Transatlantic,  
Community, and Relational  
models of states

2

### Round Table

MARCO MARIANO

RICHARD WALKER

SIRPA SALENIUS

ALEX MORELI

8

TSA Newsletter  
Editor – KRISTIN A. COOK

## Transatlantic Studies Association

### New Directions: Middelburg to Plymouth

Chair's Report on the 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference  
Roosevelt Study Center, The Netherlands

Giles Scott-Smith



**At the beginning of 2016**, the TSA can look back on another successful year of innovation and enterprise, and I'd like to start by thanking all those who have made it so and who have contributed to TSA's ongoing evolution.

The annual conference was held for the second year in a row across the Channel, this time in Middelburg, the Netherlands, following the 2014 event in Ghent. There is no doubt that this diversified the membership of the Association, bringing in more participants from across Europe to complement the long-standing North America-UK identity that the TSA has always had. Alongside this was the welcome attendance of many younger scholars and Ph.D. students who participated in the conference for the first time. It has long been the aim of the Association to be open (and affordable) for those starting out on their careers, and I was especially happy to be in a position to authorise several small conference grants on a competitive basis to support this development.

(Continued page 3)



## The 'gentle rain' of Specialness: Transatlantic, Community, and Relational models of states

Alison Holmes

**Transatlantic relations**, as illustrated by relations between the United States and the United Kingdom, have been the subject of countless investigations ranging from the bonds of language, history and culture through to theories of alliance, imperialism, neoliberalism, and even normative theory. These two states are generally aligned (and assessed) as western, capitalist and democratic entities that have formed and re-formed different groupings, over time, even as 'great power' status has waxed and waned. This connection has often been discussed in terms of 'specialness', despite a constant debate as to whether 'specialness' is a statement of fact, or cultural artefact.

However, consider for a moment the idea that the "quality" of specialness "is not strained" (or limited to these two specific states) and that, with apologies to Shakespeare, it is "twice blest" because it is enjoyed at both ends of a bond between two state partners in similar stages of development. In this understanding, rather than remaining the preserve of two more or less 'hegemonic' powers, specialness could help us better understand a number of strong bilateral relationships and/or small and medium power combinations that have generally been overshadowed or excluded by the Westphalian/Western notions of statehood and power or what we should recognize as a more 'global' stage in state development. In other words, perhaps the "gentle rain" of specialness that falls "from heaven on the place beneath" nurtures many different combinations of states and models of interaction.

Having observed this crack in the stubborn façade of UK/US transatlantic relations in that we can see that the traditional understanding of 'special' transatlantic relations is incomplete at best – should we throw out our dated ideas, or where should we look for other models of state interaction and development?

One common starting point for an examination of different models of states and their relations is the English School and its distinction between a "states system" and an "international society". Their further assertion is that the Westphalian state or the European states system is the only one (from a number they identify in the ancient world: Sumer, Assyria, Persia, Classical Greece, Macedonia, India,

15<sup>th</sup> Annual TSA  
Conference

University of  
Plymouth,  
England

4-6 July 2016

(Continued on 5)





The TSA welcomed Professor Inderjeet Parmar and Professor Jessica Gienow-Hecht as Plenary Speakers.  
Middelburg, 2015

## Chair's Report

(continued from page 3)

**Thanks must also go to Mark Seddon, the TSA D.C. Watt prize-winner in 2014, for organizing the first D.C. Watt panel of Ph.D. students at the Middelburg conference. This (new) tradition of the prize-winner organizing a panel at the following year's conference is now being continued in fine fashion by our 2015 winner, Ben Zdencanovic from Yale, for the Plymouth conference.**

We also said farewell to one of TSA's most faithful regulars, Joe McKinney, who after fourteen years of conference attendance is unlikely to attend in the future due to family commitments. Thanks Joe – you will forever be our 'honorary Canadian'!

Two other developments at the 2015 conference are worth mentioning. Firstly, we introduced the position of Honorary Trustee to serve three-year terms as part of the Management Committee, and I welcome the willingness of Professor Andrew Williams, Tony Jackson and Michael Cullinane to accept this appointment. Secondly, the first Teaching/Learning

seminar was held at the conference under the able guidance of Management Committee members Chris Jespersen and Simon Rofe. The interactive discussion indicated the interest among Association members in teaching and thinking 'transatlantically', and it is to be hoped that this venture will be expanded in the future, including the provision of resources via the website.

After long negotiations we have been able to arrange an online subscription to the *Journal of Transatlantic Studies* for TSA members, at a slightly reduced rate. This will be made available for the first time as an option for participants in the Plymouth conference this coming July. TSA members will from now on have a choice to subscribe to the hard copy or the online version. Access to the online version will begin with Volume 14 in 2017.

At the end of 2015 we were able to announce the arrival of a new award, the annual TSA-Cambridge University Press Book Prize, open to all Association members who publish or edit a book within the set calendar year. Six titles have been submitted for the 2016 prize, and I am grateful to the book prize

## Chair's Report...

committee, led by Priscilla Roberts, for taking on the extra responsibility to choose the winner. So if you have a book coming out in the next twelve months, I encourage you to have it nominated for next year's prize.

A further, equally if not more significant development, was the successful bid for a joint SHAFR-TSA Graduate Summer Institute. Every year the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations attracts bids from institutions wanting to organize and host this prestigious graduate student event. In early 2015 I prepared, together with SHAFR's Ken Osgood and Hugh Wilford, a proposal entitled 'Intelligence, Culture, and Propaganda in the Cold War' to be submitted to the SHAFR board. Despite stiff competition – including a group wanting to host the event at Cambridge University – we were told during the SHAFR conference in Washington DC that our bid had won. Since then TSA's Vice-Chair Simon Rofe has joined our group, and we are laying plans for holding the event at Leiden University in the Netherlands where I will act as host. Almost fifty candidates have applied for this event, and in true TSA style we aim to invite five Europeans and five North Americans as participants. SHAFR has long had good relations with TSA, including its sponsorship of the SHAFR Keynote Lecture (which will continue in Plymouth this year with our guest speaker Barbara Keys), but the acceptance of the joint bid has opened up a new level of cooperation which we hope to take into the future.



Last, but definitely not least, the Management Committee devoted a lot of time through September-November to renewing and clarifying the terms of office of TSA officers, and the most appropriate sequence of elections to fill these posts. There was general agreement that the current one-year positions do not contribute to building a stable and forward-looking Association, but there are of course many possible alternatives. After much email traffic and sharing of opinion, and the circulation of countless drafts, a plan has been prepared and unanimously accepted within the Committee that will now be sent out to all TSA members this Spring, in preparation for formal acceptance at the AGM during the conference in July. I would like to thank my colleagues on the Committee for sticking to the goal and for the open and collegial discussion that led to the plan itself.

It is an honour and a pleasure to act as Chair of TSA and I have enjoyed devoting time to all of these developments over the past year. However, little could be achieved without the equally committed contributions of my fellow officers, Simon Rofe (Vice-Chair), Kristin Cook (Secretary), Michael Cullinane (Treasurer 2014-2015) and Tom Mills (Treasurer 2015-2016), who have been an excellent and very professional team. I look forward to working together with them and with everyone connected to TSA in the coming year.

**Giles Scott-Smith**  
**Leiden University**

**Reporting on the 14<sup>th</sup> Annual  
TSA Conference, Middelburg**

**6-8 July 2015**



## The 'gentle rain' of Specialness... Continued from page 2.

China, Rome, the Byzantine system and the Islamic system) that managed the full transition from a system to form a society. Aside from the Euro-centricity of this claim, this approach also fails to consider how this European model might continue to evolve as states adapt to new circumstances or, indeed, whether other states systems might have evolved in their own right, even if that did not seem possible at the time.

The argument based on this observation is essentially that two discernible models have emerged from that original European narrative. The first is the Transatlantic model as illustrated in UK/US relations and which persists (somewhat ironically) as a version of the 'old fashioned' European system: two separate, sovereign states that are enmeshed and embedded at every level in each other's affairs, but nonetheless clearly separate, with clearly maintained boundaries and defending distinct notions of security. They are Westphalian to the core and proud of it as demonstrated by the fact that both are active missionaries for such a system elsewhere in the world.

The second is a Community model in which states operate in ways that go well beyond even the most 'special' of relations. European states have re-written the core ideas of statehood and regularly deal with issues of economics, politics and culture in a shared, or more 'constructivist' manner. In so doing, they create and recreate a new form of interaction that is far more 'global' in that non-state actors are more welcome, traditional issues are more networked, and borders have less salience.

For many onlookers, these two models would suffice. If the Westphalian state system was effectively the 'seed stock' of statehood for the entire world, then the style of interaction used by Community/continental states and the more robust sovereignty of states such as the two that form the Transatlantic link, could accurately reflect the range of options available to any and all states in the global system. However, should we not also consider the possibility that other points of origin provided a catalyst for entirely different forms of statecraft and managed to move from a mere "system" to a fully formed "society"?

As globalization drives states to ever closer communication and interconnection, surely the only possible answer to this question must be 'yes', and we need look no further than the original list of ancient states systems to find the evidence. Many of the ancient systems are no more, or have morphed beyond recognition, but it can be no coincidence that India and China are both growing powers, rooted in long histories with distinct cultures and clear ideas of statecraft. Further, both have developed, and successfully operate an alternative understanding of power and sovereignty that should be described as a heterarchy and visualized as a series of concentric circles with zones of influence (known as a mandala). These societies were/are not based on fixed boundaries or the threat of coercion and control in a hierarchical sense, but operate from a central hub with a reach that radiates out and back again in what can only be described as an overtly Relational model. (Cont.)

2016 SHAFR-TSA  
Summer Institute in the Netherlands

'Culture, Propaganda, and Intelligence in Foreign Relations'

[www.transatlanticstudies.com](http://www.transatlanticstudies.com)

## The 'gentle rain' of Specialness...

The suggestion here is threefold. First, the presumption that other states systems either disappeared or were overtaken by the Western/Westphalian system was mistaken. Second, an alternative understanding of statecraft in which power is expressed as coexisting heterarchies (vs one single hierarchy) was being used and developed elsewhere. Third, as all states become more 'special' or indeed more 'global' (and non-Western states become more visible as a consequence) the traditional narrative is coming under pressure and presents an urgent need for a wider understanding of interaction and governance.

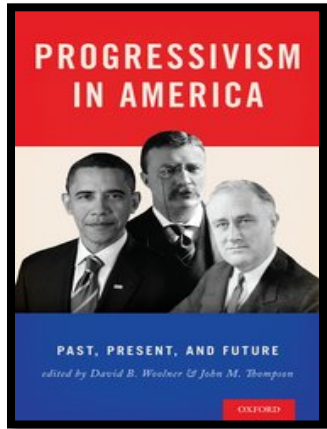
Transatlantic relations have been studied from many perspectives, but perhaps it is time to examine this not as *the* hegemonic system, but as *one of a number* of models at work within a wider international system, all hopefully contributing to an international society in which all states can participate equally.

**Alison Holmes**  
**Humboldt State University**

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**Alison Holmes** is the International Studies Program Leader at Humboldt State University. Prior to teaching, Holmes worked in British politics for ten years. She also worked for the BBC, was Managing Director of the largest transatlantic business organization and speechwriter to the US ambassador in London. She received her PhD in international relations in 2005 from the London School of Economics. Her research interests include transatlantic relations, diplomacy and international relations theory.





***Progressivism in America:  
Past, Present, and Future***

Edited by David B. Woolner & John M. Thompson  
(Oxford University Press, 2015)

Featuring essays by leading scholars, analysts and commentators, including E.J. Dionne, Jonathan Alter, Joseph Stiglitz, and Rosa Brooks, this book looks at the factors that will lead the U.S. in a more progressive direction and away from the conservative agenda that has dominated our politics for the past several decades.

*'Progressivism in America* superbly accomplishes what too few of us even try, much less do well: carefully and insightfully connect past and present. [...] It is not too much to say that presidential candidates as well as ordinary citizens should read this outstanding collection.' Robert D. Johnston, University of Illinois at Chicago and co-editor, *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era*

*'This is a beautifully crafted set of writings [...]* anyone who cares about American politics should read it to understand the achievements and limits of one of the main currents of thought and policy in modern U.S. history.' Michael Kazin, author of *American Dreamers: How the Left Changed a Nation* and co-editor, *Dissent*



***Journal of Transatlantic Studies  
Special Issues 2016***

***Blurring Boundaries: Race and Transatlantic  
Identities in Culture and Society*** (14ii)

Guest editors: Elizabeth T. Kenney,  
Sirpa Salenius, Whitney Womack Smith

If, during the era before 'Enlightenment', blackness came into relief against a synthesis of biblical exegeses and vague physical explanations dating from antiquity, during the eighteenth century, the concept of blackness was increasingly dissected, handled, weighed, and used as a demonstrable wedge between human categories. More than just a descriptor, blackness became a thing, defined less by its inverse relationship to light than by its supposed materiality.

It has become a common observation that blackness, and race more generally, is a social construct. But examining whiteness as a social construct offers more answers. The essential problem is the inadequacy of white identity. We don't know the history of whiteness, and therefore are ignorant of the many ways it has changed over the years. If you investigate that history, you'll see that white identity has been no more stable than black identity.

***The Impact of Churchill's Fulton Speech - a  
perspective from 70 years on*** (14iv)

Guest editor: Steve Marsh

Round Table Reflections...

## Bridging the Gap: The Transatlantic Paradigm and Periodization Patterns in Trans-Atlantic History

Marco Mariano



**A conversation on the ‘transatlantic paradigm’** is especially important for European historians of American foreign relations who, due to their geographic and institutional positionality, are often studying the relations between America and the world through lenses that are either implicitly or explicitly transatlantic.<sup>1</sup>

As I engaged a broad literature on the transatlantic flows and exchanges that provided the context for my research, I piled up empirical evidence suggesting that a ‘long Atlantic’ encompassing the 19<sup>th</sup> century and at least the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century indeed existed as a historical-geographical unit of analysis and should be studied in its own terms as well as in its global connections. In fact I came away with evidence suggesting that some sort of transatlantic paradigm, far from being merely an abstract analytical tool created *ex post* by historians, had often shaped the outlook and actions of real historical actors. When Frederick Douglass proclaimed in 1852 that ‘Oceans no longer divide, but link nations together. From Boston to London is now a holiday excursion. Space is comparatively annihilated. Thoughts expressed on one side of the Atlantic are distinctly heard on the other’ he expressed a widely shared view among abolitionists and supporters of slavery alike. He was also anticipating the awareness of Atlantic interdependence popularized 90 years later by Walter Lippmann when he wrote that ‘It is manifest that in seeking to separate ourselves from the great wars of Europe, we cannot rely on the Atlantic ocean. It has never been a barrier to involvement in wars. Our geography books are as misleading as our history books [...] our people have been misled to think that oceans are an impregnable barrier. Oceans are not a barrier. They are a highway’.<sup>2</sup>

However, the search for an Atlantic paradigm for the study of modern and contemporary transatlantic relations seems elusive at best. As Thomas Bender wrote recently, ‘the U.S. academy may admire but does not recognize as Atlantic histories the Atlantic studies of Mary Nolan, Victoria De Grazia, Volker Berghahn’ or James Kloppenberg, Daniel Rodgers and others, and by all accounts the same is true in Europe.’<sup>3</sup>

In fact the ‘new Atlantic history’ has reshaped the study of the Atlantic space in the early modern era but, by and large, it has been unable or unwilling to investigate the peculiar dynamics, constitutive elements, and geographical contours of the Atlantic world in the last two centuries. As if the methodological or ideological



## Bridging the Gap...

rejection of the early post-war notion of 'Atlantic community' as a tool for the study of transatlantic relations prevented the recognition of the modern and contemporary Atlantic as a distinctive unit of historical analysis, a specific slice of world history. On the one hand, the explicit assumption is that, after the early decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the expansion of European imperialism and the spread of international commerce make a global framework more useful than an Atlantic one; on the other the implicit fear is that projecting the Atlantic framework across the 19<sup>th</sup> and into the 20<sup>th</sup> century may amount to providing a vast historical coverage to the ideological construct of 'the West'.

Only in very recent years have the chronological boundaries (separating the early modern Atlantic from what came later) come under scrutiny: more than ten years ago Donna Gabaccia had called for a re-periodization of Atlantic studies based on the assumption that in the 19<sup>th</sup> century 'the very changes that undermined the earlier Atlantic world were creating a new Atlantic, with a new geography and place in the world', and has urged Atlanticists to 'reunite the somewhat separate streams of 'red', 'black', and 'white' Atlantic world and Atlantic economy' while, at the same time, acknowledging that 'the Atlantic of the last half century seems in almost every way a narrower and more limited network of connections than in the past'. Similarly, practitioners of the early modern Atlantic like Philip Morgan and Jack Greene have urged their fellow Atlanticists to reconsider the temporal boundaries of Atlantic history in the light of 19<sup>th</sup>-century migration and trade patterns and of the commercial, cultural, and political ties between Europe and the new Latin American nations: 'Wherever the Atlantic remains a vital, even privileged arena of exchange among the four continents surrounding it, Atlantic history can still be a useful tool of analysis'.<sup>4</sup> This quest for 'a long Atlantic in a wider world' remains largely unanswered, however, as the multiple patterns of integration between the two sides of the Atlantic are being empirically investigated but not fully recognized at the theoretical level. It would seem there is still a vacuum in our ability to conceptualize the Atlantic space after the early modern period.

I conclude by offering a few modest suggestions aimed at bridging this gap between theory and empirical research in the history of transatlantic relations. First, if we really take the quest for a cosmopolitan and interdisciplinary 'history without borders' seriously, we should worry about borders between sub-fields, not just between nations. I believe that a reconsideration of the contemporary Atlantic space should take seriously the transnational turn meant, as Sven Beckert put it, as a 'way of seeing', as a disposition to uncover connections across political units that is not limited to specific subfields or methodological approaches. This is made easier by recent developments in sub-fields that in the past have not always been at the forefront of methodological innovation. Political and diplomatic history, far from being the top-down approaches that once focused almost entirely on institutions, decision-makers, and white men, have gone through a dramatic renewal of their own in the last two decades, and can hardly be left out of the picture.

In the same vein, intellectual history can illustrate the multidirectional exchanges of ideas and policies that overlapped with the flows of men and commodities across the modern and contemporary Atlantic.

Second, the Atlantic world as a tool of analysis is not a self-contained civilizational bloc, the final stage of a teleological design 'from Plato to NATO' revived by Samuel Huntington in the 1990s and popularized after 9/11. The world is not flat, geography and space matter in the study of history, and the Atlantic space is not purely ideological or fictional. It as a porous, permeable space that should be conceptualized as distinct and cohesive and, the same time, understood in the light of its connections to the wider world.

## Bridging the Gap...

Finally, fears that conceptualizing and researching the contemporary Atlantic as a discrete geo-historical unit—whose relation to the early modern Atlantic world is defined by long-term continuities as well as pivotal breaks—amounts to ‘NATO history’ or to a ‘special relationship’ writ large should finally be overcome by a new generation of historians unencumbered by the ideological legacy of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

**Marco Mariano**  
**Università del Piemonte Orientale**

<sup>1</sup> On positionality and the writing of American history in Europe see *Historians across Borders. Writing American History in a Global Age*, ed. by Nicolas Barreyre, Michael Heale, Stephen Tuck, Cécile Vidal (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014).

<sup>2</sup> Frederick Douglass, ‘The Meaning of July 4th for the Negro’, July 5 1852; Walter Lippmann, ‘America in the World’, *Life* (3 June 1940).

<sup>3</sup> Thomas Bender, ‘Positionality, Ambidexterity, and Global Frames’, in *Historians across Borders*, 172.

<sup>4</sup> Donna Gabaccia, ‘A Long Atlantic in a Wider World’, *Atlantic Studies*, 1.1 (2004), 8, 16, 18; Jack P. Greene and Philip D. Morgan, ‘Introduction’, in *Atlantic History: A Critical Appraisal* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 21.

## TSA Website:

[www.transatlanticstudies.com](http://www.transatlanticstudies.com)

**TSA BOOK REVIEWS:** The TSA looks forward to publishing a special edition of the Newsletter prior to the Plymouth conference, along with a special round of online book reviews to complement the 2016 *Journal of Transatlantic Studies*.

**CHAIR’S ‘BLOG’:** Starting in February, news reports will be published regularly on the TSA website.

**CONFERENCE NEWS:** The 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Meeting of the TSA will be held at the University of Plymouth, 4-6 July 2016. Delegates can find conference registration, travel and accommodation information on the TSA website.

**D.C. WATT PRIZE:** Applicants for the 2016 Prize can find eligibility requirements and other information under ‘Resources’.



Round Table Reflections...**The Transatlantic World  
and the Problem of  
Geography****Richard Walker**

**The field of Transatlantic Studies is to be complemented for its transgressions!** The appearance of a self-conscious field of 'transatlantic studies' is a sign of the broader rediscovery of geography in the social sciences and humanities. For geographers this is to be praised, and the virtues of a focus on the transatlantic are clear when posed against much traditional historiography and geography.

Geography is, nonetheless, missing from the disciplinary declaration of independence and from the Journal associated with the Transatlantic Studies Association (TSA). For example, the TSA website declares: 'The TSA was created in 2001 to bring together those scholars for whom the 'transatlantic' is an important frame of reference: historians, political scientists and international relations, sociologists, cultural and literary theorists'. No geographers. I did a search of the journal back issues and found exactly one article by a geographer.

Given this inattention to geography as a field, Transatlantic Studies should be scrutinized for its inherent spatial assumptions and errors – which, I should add, are common to all manner of scholarly work. As a geographer and outsider to the field, I would like to offer five critical alerts for consideration. Some of this may seem obvious, but I doubt that most of you have thought through the full array of issues raised.

### **I. The problem of place and space**

The first difficulty faced by a field like Transatlantic Studies is that of defining and bounding the object of study. The transatlantic world is an open system, as are all geographic places or territories. Not only is this a matter of defining your field of study, it affects how the transatlantic world operates and how one thinks about it. This has four elements:

1. Place matters: Every place has its particularities, its unity and coherence, its boundaries, and this remains true even in an increasingly transgressive world system. This is no longer Vidal de la Blache's lost world of local regions in France. But neither is it just a world of nation-states, as in International Relations theory. Focusing on countries makes life easier, but, as we know, there are other kinds of geographic spaces that matter and which cohere. The transatlantic world is one such 'place'.

## The Problem of Geography

2. The coherence of places: That a Transatlantic World exists is not in question (no postmodern nihilists here, I hope). We all have a working image of it, just as one does of the front of a head versus the back. This can be a perfectly scientific starting point (trying to divide heads is pointless). Beware the temptation to define, clarify and nail down what is a loose and open-ended system. Europe is incoherent enough, and even nation-states are porous and works in progress. We have to live with this uncomfortable openness. But the boundaries of the TAW are always in question, as are the ties that bind within it. That is what your research work is necessarily about.

3. Spatial relations: Places don't just have locations and they don't exist in isolation. They relate to one another through all manner of ties, such as trade, warfare, migration, flows of capital, transit in ideas and policies. These ties/links need to be specified, however, and studied, not just asserted. It is not enough to say everything is connected, every place is globalized. Here, too, research is required, not assertion.

4. The eternal internal-external: In the unending dialectic of place and space, every place internalizes relations and elements of other places, both near and far. Wales is quite different from England but is also full of English culture, political practices, ideas, language and more. This is going to be true of the Transatlantic World: it exists in relation to its many internal localities *and* to an external world beyond the Atlantic.

## II. The problem of scale

The dyad of place and space is only a starting point. Now we need to complicate matters by adding geographic scale. Most disciplines simplify the world by having only two scales: the national, because of clear political boundaries, and the global, with no boundaries to worry about at all. Transatlantic Studies wisely breaks with the modern obsession with the nation-state and the postmodern one with globalization, but the trick is to be able to juggle all manner of scales even as one highlights the role of the Transatlantic. As a first pass, there are three dimensions of scale to be taken into account:

### 1. Multiple Scales:

- Cities & metropolises - as an urbanist I can't emphasize enough the importance of cities in economies, culture and politics.
- Subnational regions - this scale highlights uneven development within nation-states and problems of national disunity. Regionalism is well established within the EU, but less recognized in North America.
- Multinational groups - this scale refers to the transnational, as in the cases of the Baltic/Scandinavia, Mediterranean/Southern Europe, US/Canada, US/Mexico, Central Europe/Central America.
- Continental arenas - obviously refers to the EU, but also to NAFTA, the former USSR, and looser political organizations like the African Union.
- Transoceanic areas - like the transatlantic world, but equally the transpacific world or the Indian Ocean arc.

2. Beyond Russian boxes: The geographic ties that bind places together crisscross boundaries, defying spatial coherence and orderly hierarchies. For example, the Transatlantic World of the past was made up of several European colonial systems reaching into the Americas; but those systems extended far beyond the Atlantic, as well. Or consider the disruptive effects today on the Transatlantic of such linkages as Euro-Asian pipelines, the British Commonwealth or the US-ASEAN alliance.



## The Problem of Geography

3. Scale shuffling (scale jumping): Scales are dynamic geographic systems of territorial bounding, internal unification and disunity, international agreements and trade, corporate strategies and organization, and so forth. These are animated by politics, competition, and movements that push states, capitalists and other actors to shift scales in order to advance their goals and interests, avoid democratic control, class struggles, etc.

### III. The Problem of Centers & Peripheries

A third potential error is misplaced and displaced centrality. The metaphor of center and periphery has a powerful grip on the minds of social scientists. At any scale, an obsession with centrality can be stifling. At a global scale, critics have long taken Eurocentrism to task, but the same may be true at lesser scales, whether it is always prioritizing the East Coast of the United States, Paris within France, or northwestern Europe within the EU. I want to point out two main ways in which Misplaced Centrality may affect Transatlantic Studies negatively:

#### 1. Misplaced Centrality:

- Displaced Eurocentrism: By unifying the Atlantic World, one may just be shifting the European core onto a wider (but quite conventional) North Atlantic 'West', without actually saying anything different about the nature of a Eurocentric world. This is what one author critical of Transatlantic Studies calls the 'narcissism of small differences' vis-a-vis the wider world. It also involves the danger of nostalgia by attaching too much importance to Europe among the many global relations maintained by the United States as the imperial power of our time.
- North Atlanticism: I am struck by the rather sharp disciplinary boundary set up between North and South Atlantic Studies, whether in the more contemporary version of the Transatlantic Studies Association or the deeper historiography of the Atlantic world. This schism greatly reduces the power of the conceptual leap made by the field. I just do not see how the split can be maintained, given such overlaps as the leading role of Iberia in European expansion, the Caribbean as crossroads of slavery & empire, the Euro-American reverberations of the age of revolution, or the role of Latin America in the rise of the US commercial empire. Why not hold a conference with papers from both sides on what's gained and what's lost in preserving the north/south divide?
- Multiple centers: In a world of many places, many scales, there are multiple core areas, and this is certainly true of as large a geographic arena as the Transatlantic World. One way of handling the problem is by reference to the idea of city-systems, which link together many urban centers; but, again, city-systems theory has often been too rigidly hierarchical, as in the obsession with 'world cities' in recent years. One needs to avoid excessive attention to London, New York, Washington and Berlin, as if they were a short-hand for national politics or economic affairs.

#### 2. Centers and Peripheries:

I have to caution against the strong but mistaken bias in geographic thinking toward prioritizing core areas as where things happen and peripheries as where people are being had. It is not that simple.

- Reciprocity of centers and peripheries - spatial interactions are not one-way relations. Peripheries are in conversation at all times with centers (unless we are talking about empty, neglected places, but key peripheries are not like that at all).

## The Problem of Geography

- Peripheries as intensive sites - peripheries can be the most exploited places in a country or an empire, but they can also be the most focused sites of economy and politics, for the same reason. Need I remind anyone of the key role of sugar and slavery in the making of Northern European commerce and wealth?
- Peripheries as open, fluid & dynamic fields - peripheral areas are often newer, less established and more open fields of society, politics and economics, and hence quite likely to be the place where new ideas and practices arise first. Frederick Jackson Turner was not wrong to emphasize the frontier in the construction of the United States, even if he romanticized the pioneer trades and farmers.

## IV. The Problem of Space & Time

A fourth problem in geographic thinking is temporality and socio-spatial dynamics, which I have touched on but not spoken to directly. This affects the Transatlantic Studies project in several ways:

1. Multiple trajectories: Places, at every scale, are dynamic, changing and moving through history. But they do not do so at the same rate or along the same path. Does anyone still cling to the old Modernization Thesis where the Backward Places of the world are simply playing historical catch-up? There is path dependency and place difference that persists through time, despite all the homogenizing tendencies of capitalism and global integration. Transatlantic Studies scholars are not unaware of this dynamic, but it complicates the field because one has to be carefully comparative/relational in local studies within the field and one has to take account of the stress and strain that these uneven developments continuously put on the coherence of the Transatlantic World.

2. Shifting Centers & Hierarchies: Northern Europe overtook the Mediterranean world; the Dutch and British empires overtook the Iberian and French; and the American overtook the European. Lyon surpassed Genoa, to be overtaken in turn by Antwerp, then Amsterdam, which then gave way to London as the commercial/financial center of Europe. This old principle of the Braudelian worldview needs to be taken to heart. Not only is it true that we need a sense of multiple centers and center-periphery interaction, we need to recognize that sometimes the geography of the world can be turned upside down, at many scales.

At the subnational scale, the shifts in urban and region hierarchies have often been dramatic. This is most clearly the case in more decentralized, federalized states like the US, Canada, and Italy, and of course the 20<sup>th</sup> century has repeatedly turned Germany topsy-turvy. But even the more stable internal hierarchies of Britain and France have been roiled by economic and political forces, such as the decline of the English north & rise of the French Midi.

This principle, at the largest scale, refers back to what I have said before about the relations between the North and South Atlantic and between Europe and the United States. Moreover, it speaks to the rise and fall of the Transatlantic World as a whole: the overtaking of the Mediterranean World by the Atlantic after 1500, the triumph of the North Atlantic over South Atlantic after 1700, the dominance of the USA over Europe after 1945, and now...

3. The rise of a Trans-Pacific World: Coming from California, I am always surprised by the relative neglect of the rise of the Trans-Pacific World in Europe. Economically, it surpassed the Atlantic over 30 years ago, even before the explosive growth of capitalist-road China. California is by far the largest state in the US at 40 millions, the world's 8th largest economic unit, and the global center of high tech and the web world.

## **The Problem of Geography**

### **V. The Problem of Nature**

Geography is not just the study of places, scales and socio-spatial relations. It has always included a sense of 'man's role in changing the face of the earth', or socio-nature relations. What I see almost nothing of in Transatlantic Studies is what is commonly called 'environmental studies'. How did this get left out? An essential dimension of the rise of the Transatlantic World was the plunder of the Americas for natural resources and primary commodities.

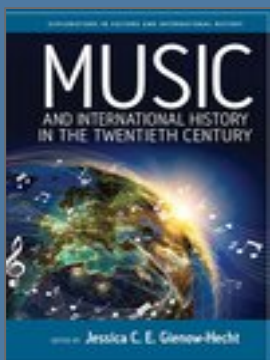
I am afraid that this stems from more than a lack of geography and geographers. It manifests a larger failure of Transatlantic Studies to be grounded in more than cultural studies and international relations. This is where economics, environmental science, political sociology and urban studies should all come into play, but do not.

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## *Music and International History in the Twentieth Century*

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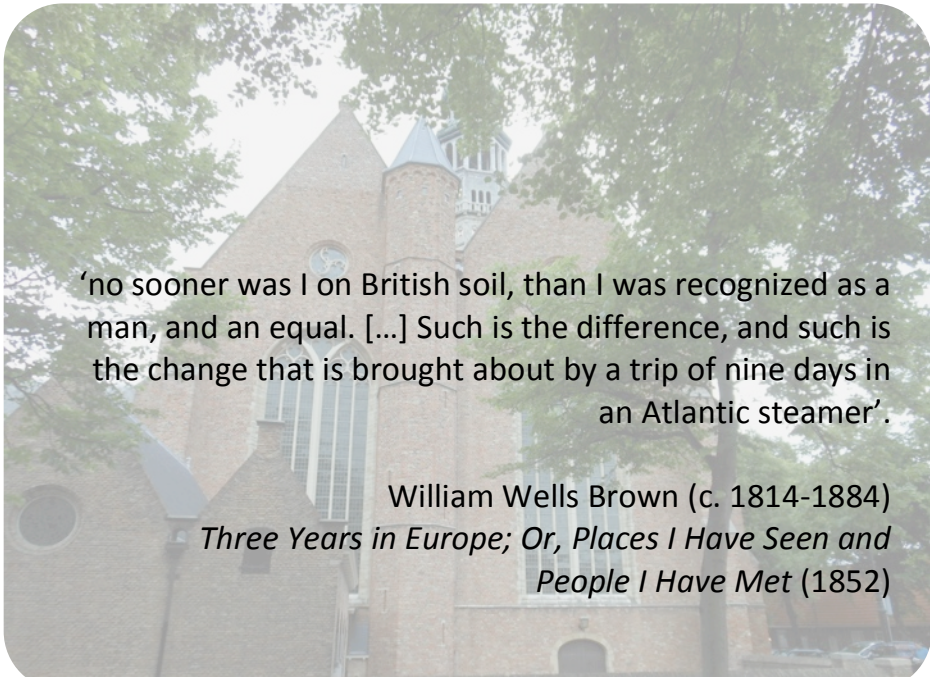
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Richard Walker



Round Table Reflections...**Reconsidering  
Transatlantic  
Literature****Sirpa Salenius**


‘no sooner was I on British soil, than I was recognized as a man, and an equal. [...] Such is the difference, and such is the change that is brought about by a trip of nine days in an Atlantic steamer’.

William Wells Brown (c. 1814-1884)  
*Three Years in Europe; Or, Places I Have Seen and  
 People I Have Met* (1852)

**Oceans can be seen as liminal spaces separating the familiar from the foreign;** they can be associated with uncertainty and powerlessness but also with great potential and revitalization. They can serve as dividers, assuming the function of borders that separate peoples and nations, but can also be understood as connecting and unifying territories that become spaces for cultural encounters. In many instances, the crossing of oceans signifies adventure, or can imply a change in perspective; the distance created between realities can be liberating and rejuvenating for the mind, body, and worldviews of transatlantic travellers. In the field of Transatlantic Studies scholars have examined transatlantic influence and bridges of collaboration that connected different cultural and socio-political realities on the ocean's trans-borders. As scholars have observed, activists, writers, and artists navigated transatlantically, and texts, ideas, and trends circulated cross-oceanilly, reaching the shores bordering the Atlantic.

Spatio-temporal relation, then, is crucial in the fertile and dynamic field of Transatlantic Studies, which is itself in continuous movement and in process of reinventing its critical framework. In the development of literature, transatlantic exchange has been significant in giving life to new forms of literary expression. Anglo-American literary relations became the axis for the study of transatlantic literature in its early phases, partially because of the close ties Americans had with Britain since the birth of the new American nation. Since the late eighteenth century, cultural influences flowed across the two continents, veering literatures towards previously unexplored forms of expression. European travel writing, for instance, produced the adventures of British dandies and their metamorphosis into Western ranchers, while women's travel narratives idealized the situation of American women and reform work. Americans in the New World, instead, were greatly influenced by literary works written in Europe, or the Old World, but at the same time they were looking to break away from European influence and to create their own national literature. Scholars' persistent fascination with the American-British dialogue is demonstrated by the publication of such recent scholarly works as Eve Tavor Bannet's *Transatlantic Stories and the History of Reading, 1720-1810: Migrant Fictions* (2014), which centers on transatlantic print culture.

To reflect the significance of other national literatures in the development of American writing, the study of

## Reconsidering Transatlantic Literature

transatlanticism subsequently enlarged its horizon to include the literary ties of American writers with other European countries such as France and Italy, or the study of European writers in the United States. The shift of focus, for example, to include Americans in Italy, has built on early scholarly publications that appeared starting from the 1930s by such writers as Giuseppe Prezzolini. His examination of Americans' discovery of Italy (*Come gli americani scoprono l'Italia (1750-1859)*, 1933) was continued in the book-length publications of Paul Baker, Klaus Lanzinger, William Stowe, and many others. The field of inquiry, however, remained Eurocentric and linked to the North Atlantic, and the analysis of transatlantic literature became associated with the New World-Old World dichotomy, or the comparison between the familiar and foreign.

Initially, in the sixteenth century, the term 'New World' referred to the Americas and 'Old World' to Europe and Asia, but the terms changed their significance in the nineteenth century when American, and some European, writers started to use them to define a polarity created between Europe and the United States. The New World-Old World comparisons first appeared in American travel writing starting from Washington Irving's romantic *Sketch Book* (1819-20), which influenced many successive American writers, who used the perceived contrast to articulate their ideas of the older Europe but also to conceptualize their own nation and national identity. The United States, scholar Monica Rico suggests, 'could not be exceptional without reference to other societies' (*Nature's Noblemen: Transatlantic Masculinities and the Nineteenth-Century American West*, Yale, 2013, 13). In a similar way, European travellers and writers sought encounters with the New World, mirroring their own narratives against American discourses of gender and race. Although the Self-Other paradigm appeared in the field of Cultural Studies in the 1960s in the writings of Frantz Fanon, literary critics have analyzed such polarity more frequently by applying Edward Said's theories of 'othering' processes discussed in his *Orientalism* (1978). The Self-Other paradigm is often linked to encounters in the 'contact zone', a term coined by Mary-Louise Pratt in *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992). In this way, theories and paradigms invented in the fields of literature, history, social and cultural studies have intertwined in literary critics' examination of travel, dislocation, expatriation, and exile, which are merely some of the numerous themes conceptualized in transatlantic narratives.

The transatlantic comparison appeared in travel writing and fiction of authors whose writing moved from Romanticism to Realism and included such prominent literary figures as Nathaniel Hawthorne, Mark Twain, Edith Wharton, and Constance Fenimore Woolson; it culminated in the works of Henry James, who became known as the master of the 'transatlantic novel' or fiction with the 'international theme', which he developed into a complex analyses of values, morals, attitudes, and worldviews. In their texts, transatlantic travellers repeatedly convey either their rejection or identification with foreign cultures, as they negotiate between the familiar and foreign.

The trend of American writers to look toward Europe for an environment that would allow them to create innovative literary styles continued in the 1920s with the Lost Generation: Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and Gertrude Stein experimented with American Modernism in the Paris milieu. Hemingway's 'A Very Short Story' is one of the many stories that continue to contrast Europe with the United States. And in the 1950s and -60s, James Baldwin, who defined himself a 'transatlantic commuter', would find a creative haven in Europe, in Paris, where he wrote one of the first American novels that explored sexually marginalized identities: *Giovanni's Room* was published in 1956. The analysis of race and sexuality in the transatlantic context meant incorporating into mainstream discourse, among dominant narratives, voices from what in hegemonic cultural expression can be understood as the periphery.

## Reconsidering Transatlantic Literature

Such inclusion of literary expression by the socially ostracized continued in the introduction of studies dealing with the Black, Green, Red, and White Atlantic led by Paul Gilroy with his groundbreaking book on the hybridity of transatlantic black culture, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (1993). In addition, some scholars, whose contributions are gathered in *Native Americans and Anglo-American Culture, 1750–1850: The Indian Atlantic*, edited by Tim Fulford and Kevin Hutchings (Cambridge University Press, 2009) work on the 'Indian Atlantic', on investigating the relations between Britons, Native Americans and Anglo-Americans. As David Armitage writes in his review of 'The Red Atlantic' (*Reviews in American History*, 2001), 'The black Atlantic of the African diaspora has been joined by the green Atlantic of the Irish dispersal. The white Atlantic has itself become a self-conscious field of study rather than the defining model for all other Atlantic histories' (479). In many instances, the transatlantic distance was important in shaping the authors' works but also their identities in an environment where the absence of racial discrimination or freedom to express sexuality had an impact on the way writers addressed controversial issues in their texts.

Consequently, Transatlantic Literature has transformed into a multi- and interdisciplinary field whose literary genres embrace fiction, travel writing, autobiographies, memoirs and journals, pamphlets and speeches, immigrant and migrant narratives, and popular fiction; and the methodological range, themes and topics addressed, and fields intertwined with transatlantic literature include cosmopolitanism, material culture, postcolonialism, African American and black studies, whiteness studies, gender, queer and LGBT studies that are contextualized within the fields of history, art history, and sociology. Borders and migration, space and otherness, utopias and dystopias, ekphrasis and chronotopes, stereotypes and prejudice, travel's impact on reinvention of identities are just some of the concepts and ideas examined that enrich the analysis of transatlantic literature, together with the application of critical frameworks from other disciplines. New works that invite an introduction in the analysis of literature continue to enthuse the study of transatlantic writing. Art historian Charmaine A. Nelson's *Slavery, Geography and Empire in Nineteenth-Century Marine Landscapes of Montreal and Jamaica* (Ashgate, 2015) is particularly interesting as it connects Canada with the Caribbean. Among other recent studies that invite a transatlantic application is *Cosmopolitanism and the Postnational: Literature and the New Europe*, edited by César Domínguez and Theo D'haen (Leiden/Boston: Brill/Rodopi, 2015).

In transatlantic writing such themes as the investigation of national belonging, ethnicity, constructions of race and gendered identities have created waves of interest also in relation to other geographical territories bordering the transatlantic world. More recently, then, in the field of literature, the concept of transatlanticism has been extended to include such areas as South America and the Caribbean, which is a move toward a further widening of our understanding of the development of transatlantic literature by offering a more complete and richer picture of literary influences in the transatlantic context. Some scholars have even proposed the Pan-Atlantic as a paradigm and critical approach to examining Britain in relation to Latin America and the Caribbean (see Joselyn M. Almeida, *Reimagining the Transatlantic, 1780-1890*, Ashgate, 2011), which means replacing Trans- with Pan-Atlantic. Such considerations would, however, complicate the study of literatures, forcing scholars to grapple with new problems such as how to differentiate Transatlantic from Comparative or World Literatures; it would implicate joining the on-going complex struggle with such issues as the selection of translations of texts written in languages other than English and engaging in a controversial discussion on how to familiarize students with the cultures, histories, and socio-political concerns addressed in literary works produced in the vaster territories. Such issues already are pertinent to the transatlantic exchanges in such presently marginalized areas as, for example, Portugal.

## Reconsidering Transatlantic Literature

The inclusion of the so-called peripheries in the Eurocentric approach of analyzing Transatlantic Literature can be done while simultaneously continuing to navigate toward the Caribbean and South Atlantic literary world in an attempt to recognize and value those texts that help understand, and explain, how and why the transatlantic paradigm is significant. In this context, the emphasis on transatlantic links connecting Europe with the United States and the Caribbean may remain the most relevant connection for the transmission of literary influences.

New publications together with sessions and panels at international conferences demonstrate the potential of and increasing fascination with Transatlantic Studies. Book series and journals function as vessels that connect scholars across the ocean dedicated to the exploration of the transatlantic literary world. Space, distance, and journeys—be they geographical or metaphoric—remain key concepts, often anchored to the ocean that serves as a reference point for defining and challenging borders, categories, and labels. As the nineteenth-century American essayist and literary critic, Edwin Percy Whipple, put it, books are ‘the precious depositories of the thoughts and creations of genius’ and in books ‘the world’s history moves in procession before our eyes’; in his view, ‘Books are lighthouses erected in the great sea of time’ (*Lectures on Subjects Connected with Literature and Life*, 1850). And, I would like to conclude, these lighthouses illuminate the field of Transatlantic Studies.

**Sirpa Salenius**  
**University of Tokyo**

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Round Table Reflections...

## The Ethiopic Ocean – A New Paradigm for Transatlantic History?

Alexandre L. Moreli Rocha



**During Brazil's post-WWII planning,** several national commissions came together to imagine the future and prepare the country for leadership and growth. The commission responsible for immigration and for assisting the government in its efforts to cope with the European refugee population recognized the need to open the nation's borders, but only if it was possible to ensure 'ethnic preservation to keep the predominance of white people in the formation of [Brazilian] society'.

Despite this abject racism, the 1945 commission's assessment only confirms the endurance of a North-South transatlantic paradigm for considering the dynamics of politics, economy and culture connecting both sides of the ocean. Of course, it goes without saying that there are more recent works applying the North-South paradigm as a distinctive and appropriate unit of historical analysis. Fábio Koifman, for instance, employs this model well in his *Imigrante Ideal*<sup>1</sup> when exploring the policies, ideas and problems surrounding the above mentioned transatlantic migration during the Second World War.

A different paradigm, however, has been gaining ground in the last decade: a South-South transatlantic perspective, advocating autonomous dynamics for that part of the planet. As a matter of fact, during the 2010 census, more than fifty percent of the Brazilian population declared themselves 'Afro-descendants' for the first time (using the terms "pardos" or "pretos"). According to Luiz Felipe de Alencastro, the change goes far beyond demography, it 'brings lessons from our past, about who we are and from where we came'.<sup>2</sup>

Even if the concept of *region* still provokes questions regarding spatial precision and geographic continuance through time, new political, economic and social dynamics, such as this one in Brazil, are making South Atlantic history worthy of pursuit. Actually, according to Bin Wong, even the concepts of local or global are not very precise. For him, 'conscious attention to regional spaces promises the possibility of being more mindful of the ways in which different kinds of stability can be sustained and historical changes be multiple as well as common'. Besides, he continued, 'since we know that the "national" units are misleading categories for many themes in history, especially before the consolidation of national states, we have to consider whether observing the past with an eye to the various kinds of regional space might not be better than avoiding such categories'.<sup>3</sup>

## The Ethiopic Ocean...

The period lasting from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, known as the Sailing Age, has obviously marked a distinct historical pattern in the Atlantic. Despite the evident importance of Northern societies in creating connections and feeding cultural cross-oceanic transfers, however, the system of currents and winds together with autonomous political, religious, economic and military dynamics helped to shape what historical maps and nautical guides once called the 'Ethiopic Ocean', south of the meteorological equator. According to Alencastro, this was actually 'a space without territory, a lusophone archipelago composed by the enclaves of Portuguese America and of the trade posts of Angola', Senegambia and Gulf of Guinea.<sup>4</sup>

The African decolonization process and the renewed identity of 2010 provide a manifest of an existing, not a new, South Atlantic society. The evidence of exchanges from before 1850 (when slave-trading ships stopped their voyages)—like Congolese dioceses being suffragan to the archbishopric of Bahia, troops leaving Brazil to fight wars in Africa, or merchant networks generating around fifteen thousand round trips in the South Atlantic—should provoke historians to look for a new unit of analysis for the southern region. As Anaïs Flechet has been proving, scholars should not wait for dates like the 11 November 1975 (the day Brazil became the first sovereign nation in the world to recognize Angolan independence) to claim the endurance of connections between the Southern borders of the Atlantic. In her study of Pop Music Festivals, for instance, including the World Festival of Black Arts of Dakar in 1966, Flechet shows the importance of interactions between native Africans and those arriving from the 'diaspora' in making a 'transnational music culture during the second half of the twentieth century'.<sup>5</sup>

Far from creating a separate entity from the North, a return to the 'nautical' 'Ethiopic Ocean'—as a paradigm for understanding transatlantic exchange—could help scholars begin to write a more complex narrative for societies living along the sea.

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<sup>1</sup> Rio de Janeiro, *Civilização Brasileira*, 2012.

<sup>2</sup> 'O pecado original da sociedade e da ordem jurídica brasileira', in *Novos Estudos*, n. 87 (July 2010), 5.

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