Seascapes: tides of thought and being in Western perceptions of the sea

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Introduction

For traditional British anthropology the 'other' was overseas, to be found and studied in static, bounded fields. Anthropology's intellectual agriculture of the 'field' is rightly celebrated as being fundamental to the discipline. In recent years though, it has turned into something of a quagmire, in which anthropologists get stuck (or 'dwell') while others move around them. The sea meanwhile, and the movement of those upon it, has been sorely neglected. It has been given no place, theoretical or otherwise, by a discipline that from its beginning travelled across the sea's 'vast emptiness' yet in which "The discourse of ethnography ('being there') is separated from that of travel ('getting there')" (Clifford, 1997: 23). Field-work, at most, has been muddy. Anthropological theory, rooted in the land, has often been constrained by a sedentary bias.

In departing from the land I do not wish to go overseas but out to sea, to take travel as part of ethnography and to uproot the groundedness of being and dwelling and see it instead in terms of fluidity, movement and change. The aim of this paper, then, is to better understand perceptions of the sea and the movement of seafarers, and to explore the sea's potential as an idea, metaphor and human practice. In all, to set forth a prolegomena of an anthropology of the sea, an anthropology of "They that go down to the sea in ships, That do business in great waters" (Psalm 107).

It is unsurprising, I suppose, that anthropology has had so little concern with the sea, yet the sea affects the land in countless ways. It has been the site of various European 'discoveries' and of numerous historical voyages, yet such voyages are seen as liminal events between the more interesting aspects of colony and metropole. Britain in particular not only has a maritime climate but a maritime culture. The sea is condemned as a blank environment, an empty space or void. Yet, to pass over a region so lightly – one that covers the majority of the earth's surface, that affects countless people's lives through fishing, tourism, travel or flooding, that mediates global trade, is a battleground of national powers, and has a dominating role in global ecology – seems ill-advised. And so I wish to emplace the sea, to create a space for it within the anthropological domain. Not by 'grounding' it, but by conceptualising its very fluidity.

Rivers to the sea

The 'landscape' is a recurring feature of ethnographic writing and shares an intellectual background with anthropology (Hirsch, 1995). Rivers are a central mark of many landscapes[1]. Rivers, it has to be said, are also good to think with. For Aristotle, place was of the utmost importance. In his conception, place was a vessel, a container. Or, rather, to be in a place was to be contained. Yet, while a vessel can be moved, place cannot. There is, then, the "problematic fact that a river is a place for a boat and yet the content of the water immediately surrounding a boat continually changes" (Casey, 1998: 55). The layer of water surrounding the boat is continually changing, it may contain but it cannot be a place. Thus it must be "'the whole river' that is a place" (ibid: 55) i.e., the banks and bed of the river. However, this floating vessel causes more problems, for it is the limit of the immediately surrounding water regarded as an ideal perimeter (yet as flowing water, it is constantly changing, with the result that the place of a stationary boat will be continually changing), or is it the river's bed-and-banks or even the river itself as a whole (in both of these last cases, two boats equidistant from the two banks but heading in opposite directions will occupy the same place) (ibid: 70)?

This question is yet to be resolved. I do not wish to address it myself, but rather highlight the problems involved in theorising water. Like Aristotle, Heidegger argued that to be in a place is to be contained, it is with the creation of boundaries that place emerges. In Heidegger's (1971) example of a bridge over a river, the bridge does not simply connect two banks. The banks emerge only as the bridge connects them. "The bridge gathers the earth as landscape around the stream" (ibid: 152), yet the stream itself is left flowing onwards without regard.

Moving water problematises Heidegger's place as it did Aristotle's. We need to look for different ways to conceptualise water if we are to emplace an unbounded sea. Apart from falling off the edge of the anthropological domain, though, what happens when these rivers, theoretical and real, carry us out to sea?

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[1] Water in the Australian Aboriginal landscape is a key feature of identity and survival; an acculturated and political entity (Strang, 2002). For the Achuar, rivers are the most precise landmarks and best means of transport within the Amazon. Furthermore, they are of great symbolic importance, acting as a "privileged mediator" (Descola, 1994: 271) of place and the celestial and terrestrial. Similarly, "flowing water is the dominant feature upon which the Foi focus in creating the regions of their lived space" (Weiner, 2001: 18).

Being at sea

It is Merleau-Ponty's (2004 [1962]) 'body', not Heidegger's 'place', which takes centre stage on dry land. Yet, in taking him to sea there is a danger of him 'not waving but drowning'. At sea the relationship between person and environment is mediated through technology (with the intriguing exception of swimming). There are few realms on earth where people are more out of their depth, and the history of seafaring is intimately tied to that of technology. As Acheson notes, "Marine adaptations are one of the most extreme achieved by man" (1981: 277). Ingold (2000: 186) argues that we can make no firm distinction between the natural and the artificial (or human and non-human). It is only because we are in this world that we can think the thoughts that we do. Thus, we may say, that a boat is an object that has been designed to sail the seas, but that design is itself a response to the sea.

Malinowski saw the relationship of people to their craft "as the deepest ethnographic reality" (1966 [1922]: 106). It is a reality that was all too real for Malinowski himself. On passage from his tent to civilization while ill, he writes in his diaries: "Had the feeling that the rattling of the ship's engine was myself; felt the motions of the ship as my own; it was I who was bumping against the waves and cutting through them. Was not seasick. Landed feeling broken" (1967:

33–34). For some sailors there is a symbiotic relationship between person and boat in which the boat becomes an extension of the body. Bernard Moitessier (1974), sailing alone around the world, writes not in the first person but speaks of "us" and "we", while in Melville's *Moby-Dick* (to which I return later) Captain Ahab exclaims to Starbuck: "my conscience is in this ship's keel" (Melville, 2003 [1851]: 517).

At sea the body is no longer central to perception. The combination of wind and waves takes effect not on the body but on the boat; size, depth and distance, position and direction, become relative to the boat, no longer relative to the person. The lived body still perceives, but this experience of the world is mediated through technology.

Gísli Pálsson has addressed these questions with regards to Icelandic fisherman. "Where", he asks, "are we to draw the boundaries between fishermen, their technology, and the environment?" (1994: 910). He suggests that technology is assimilated as part of one's body: "for the skilled skipper fishing technology – the boat, electronic equipment, and fishing gear – is not to be regarded as an 'external' mediator between his person and the environment but rather as a bodily extension in quite a literal sense" (ibid: 910). The perceiving body does indeed meld into the boat as the earlier quotations suggested. It is the

'corporeal intentionality' of both body and boat that actively engages with and gathers together sea-places.

From a phenomenological perspective, it is the physicality (the intentionality) of the body that imposes a structure on place through which it is understood and experienced. What of a phenomenology of seasickness then, when the physical world imposes a context on the body which it cannot understand? Here, the balance between person and place would seem to tip in favour of the latter. To the corporeal intentionality of the body we may add the "operative intentionality" of the place itself "that elicits and responds to" (Casey, 1996: 22) the perceiving subject. Our seasick sailor is unable to respond to the operative intentionality of the moving sea that imposes an overwhelming disorientation.

For the Icelandic fishermen in Pálsson's study, 'seasickness' is "also used as a metaphor for learning in the company of others, which is seen in terms of the recovery from seasickness" (1994: 901). Pálsson proposes that enskillment, be it in recovery from seasickness, fishing or ethnography (to which he makes the analogy of seasickness being akin to 'culture shock') is not a matter of mechanically internalising a body of knowledge but of an active engagement with the environment. Thus recovering from seasickness, "getting

one's sea legs – becoming skilful – means to attend to the task at hand, actively engaged with a social and natural environment" (ibid: 901). Or in other words, to attune the body's perceptions to the movement and rhythm of the sea, to learn to move in response to the sea rather than expecting the body's corporeal intentionality to dominate the seascape.

Seascapes
The sea reverberates through Malinowski's diaries as through a shell. One often comes across him sitting on the beach writing letters to E.R.M., his love. Indeed, he felt a "mystical link between her and this view" (Malinowski, 1967: 157) of the sea. The merest glimpse of the sea is often remarked upon, references to a 'dark sapphire' sea reflecting a Homeric 'wine dark sea'. As James Clifford (1986) has also noted, Malinowski's diaries share an intertextual connection to Joseph Conrad's maritime literature.

"I did not feel too buoyant and feared that the walk would tire me. But not at all; when I saw the sea I cried with joy: transparent water with a dark steely sheen in the distance…" (Malinowski, 1967: 157). I suspect that his almost daily ritual of going for a solitary row in his dinghy provided him with an even more joyous respite from his work, offering a time for reflection and solace. "The bliss of travelling under sail" (ibid: 78)

is not restricted to his diaries alone, but resurfaces in *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, in which the native is no less romantic about his craft than the European (1966 [1922]: 105). "In the customs and traditions of the native, there can be found the deep love, the admiration, the specific attachment as to something alive and personal, so characteristic of the sailor's attitude towards his craft" (ibid: 106). What is it about the sea and boats that prompts such meditation and eulogising, and why, post-Malinowski, has it remained so unsubstantial an anthropological entity? One of the few references dealing directly with 'seascapes' in anthropology is in James Carrier's (2003) study of Jamaica. However, 'seascape' here remains unquestionably co-terminus with 'landscape', including that term's ideological power in the prefix 'land'[2].

What though, should be meant by 'seascape'? Nothing fixed or static for sure. Not a "painted ship upon a painted ocean", although Coleridge (1972: 529) does at least point to the historical origins of the word here. In the most literal sense we could say it means the perception of a person at sea, close to the water away from land, the boat they are in, the sky above, the water below and their view as far as the (continually moving) horizon. Perhaps '-scape' is the wrong word altogether, suggesting as it does a pictorial representation, but it will suffice for now.

In discussing landscapes we would no doubt talk of paths and monuments and boundaries. We might also talk of how these things gather place around them as signs of human agency, reflecting aspects of intentionality, history, memory and identity. What is there for us at sea then? Nothing but a boat, one's body and endless waves, hardly deserving of the title 'place' it would seem, denied all such landmarks. The only 'seamarks' are those that are not part of the sea, those that do not belong to it but mark its borders. Yet the sea is not a neutral blank environment, an empty space or a liminal period. Consider Ariel's song in *The Tempest* (Shakespeare, Act I, Scene II, 399–404):

> Full fathom five thy father lies,
> Of his bones are coral made:
> Those are pearls that were his eyes,
> Nothing of him that doth fade,
> But doth suffer a sea-change
> Into something rich, and strange…

What is underwater and out of sight is perceived and remembered as well as any memorial on land. The bodies of the drowned are not forgotten for lack of a gravestone, rather, they are transformed[3].

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[2] Although the effect of land and the nation-state can often be felt out at sea, for instance in political arguments over national fishing rights and quotas and environmental damage.

There are no visible paths, but numerous sea-routes appear inscribed in the 'memory' of the sea (paths determined, for sailing boats, by the wind and current, not solely human agency). A diverse range of writers, for example, from Slocum (2000 [1900]) to Lévi-Strauss (1973) have been prompted to recall Columbus as they crossed the Atlantic[4]. Poetic licence is not stretched too far when Derek Walcott (quoted in Raban, 2001: 500) writes that "the sea is history":

> Where are your monuments, your
> battles, martyrs?
> Where is your tribal memory? Sirs,
> in that grey vault. The sea. The sea
> has locked them up. The sea is History.

In phenomenological terms, we may say that the boat and the lived-bodies within gather together place – the seascape – and with it memories, history and language. It is only with the presence and perception of people and their active engagement that such memories are realised and released.

Rather than being one definite sort of thing – for example, physical, spiritual, cultural, social – a given place takes on the qualities of its occupants, reflecting these qualities in its own constitution and description and expressing them in its occurrence as an event: places not only are, they happen. (And it is because they happen that they lend themselves so well

to narration, whether as history or as story) (Casey, 1996: 27).

The sea "changes in response to shifts of sensibility as dramatically as it does to shifts of wind and the phases of the moon" (Raban, 2001: 3), reflecting the perceptions of those who look upon it[5]. However, to say this is not to deny the sea has any character of its own, as a place unto itself. Rather, there is a dialectic relationship between places and the bodies in them, between corporeal and operative intentionality. "Just as there are no places without the bodies that sustain and vivify them, so there are no lived bodies without the places they inhabit and traverse" (Casey, 1996: 24).

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[3] Though the absence of such material markers may also point to a de-individualising aspect of the oceans (the 'anonymous' epitaph of Keats marks the grave of "one whose name was writ on water"), memories of the dead may dissolve into one, the sea itself becoming a "singular" memorial of the "rich and strange" that lies beneath its surface.

[4] The histories of many sea-voyages are of similar significance: the Phoenicians; the Vikings; Captain Cook; the East India Company; slave ships; deportations and New Worlds; HMS Beagle and so forth.

[5] As wonderfully illustrated by different translators' interpretation of the Anglo-Saxon poem 'The Seafarer' (see Raban, 2001: 1–3).

Literary beginnings
In the beginning…darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters (Genesis 1: 1–2).

This is not creation ex nihilo. Elemental mass, the 'watery deep', exists prior to God's passing over it. There is no void or empty space. "God, in moving over the dark Deep, is already moving over a place as well as between places" (Casey, 1998: 13). From 'the beginning', the sea is a place yet the 'deep' has an odd character, for nothing exists yet the sea is already there[6]. The legacy of Christianity is deeply entrenched in Western thought and symbolism; culture residing in the male domain of the city whilst beyond it is natural wilderness, both chaotic danger and reproductive force (Cosgrove, 1995). The sea plays a large part in this symbolic dualism and the 'place' of the sea in the Christian beginning sets it apart from the land. The sea or the great waters, that is, are the symbol for the primordial flux, the substance which became created nature only by having form imposed upon or wedded to it.

The sea, in fact, is that state of barbaric vagueness and disorder out of which civilisation has emerged and into which, unless saved by the efforts of gods and men, it is always liable to relapse. It is so little of a friendly symbol that the first thing which the author of the Book of Revelation notices in his vision of the

new heaven and earth at the end of time is that "there was no more sea" (Auden, 1951: 18–19).

From 'primordial creation', the symbolism of the sea runs deep: 'unfathomable truth and wisdom', of 'time' and 'eternity', the 'fertile' and the 'fruitless', 'untameable wilderness' and 'liberty', 'loneliness' and 'purification'. Much could be written on each of these, not to mention the symbolism of the ship.

How does such symbolism affect the sea, and what is the impact of maritime literature "moving over the face of the waters"? According to Tilley, narratives become part of the sediment of place, the two dialectically construct and reproduce each other. "Places help to recall stories that are associated with them, and places only exist (as named locales) by virtue of their emplotment in a narrative" (1994: 33). For Ingold, in turn, histories and stories are not merely laid down as sediment onto place to then be stripped away. Rather, perceiving the landscape is to remember, a remembrance not of mental images though, but remembering through a perceptual engagement "with an environment that is itself pregnant

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[6] There are numerous other examples of such watery beginnings: the Taumutaun and Mayan creation myths, in the Hebrew *Enuma Elish* (Casey, 1998) and the Aboriginal Dreaming (Strang, 2002) to name but a few.

with the past" (Ingold, 2000: 189). Such a 'pregnancy' would seem to fit well with the reproductive symbolism of the sea and the sea as history.

Telling a story does not 'cover up' the world by unfurling a narrative across it, but rather guides the reader or listener into the world. A good storyteller is one who is perceptually attuned to the environment, someone who can release the 'placeness' of a locale in the absence of bodies[7]. In discussing the sea we cannot talk of concrete paths and monuments, the material inscriptions of human being. Perceptions of the sea are a great deal more elusive and transient. Dead metaphors, metaphors which have gained habitual use and so lost their creative potential, litter the sea much as nautical expressions abound in common usage. It would be mistaken to discuss the sea separately from the literature it has prompted and the stories it contains. Although the sea may be said to reflect one's perceptions, it still harbours the thoughts of others. Literature of the sea has become an integral part of the seascape and an individual's perception of the sea is influenced by received metaphors and literary allusions; not only a person's exploratory movement through the environment but their exploratory movement through literature.

Phenomenological approaches to social life rarely give much attention to literature. A phenomenology of literature might well seem counter-intuitive, if not mutually exclusive. However, as Casey (1981) shows in his comparison of Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception* and Marcel Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past*, they are not that dissimilar. Both are descriptive practices, equally involved with space and time. They are not the same but are far from being incommensurable. Husserl claimed "Fiction is the vital element of phenomenology" (quoted in Casey, 1981: 182). Regardless of this, anthropology's own relation with literature remains, at best, ambivalent. The 'literary turn' has been a turn within anthropology, not extended outwards[8].

Odysseys
The ancient Greeks saw a strong connection between travel and knowledge. The symbolic construction of geographical distance – of the power and politics of distant lands – is still a potent conception (Helms, 1988), not least in anthropology. In *The Odyssey* there is a figurative association between sailing and poetry, a semantic similarity between sailing and song through the mastery of certain skills. Overseas journeys can be seen to be metaphorically implying poetic

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[7] According to Merleau-Ponty (2004 [1962]), even if a body is not in a place, it still has an implicit presence, and the 'place' is still a place, as long as a body can be imagined or understood to be in such a place.
[8] A rare exception is Nigel Rapport's (1994) ethnography of the writings of E.M. Forster and an English village.

endeavours, a conflation of nautical and poetic skill and terminology. For poetry, like ancient Greek ships, must be well sewn together. Such associations run wide: "A ship's sails convey meaning no less than they help carry men and cargo across the sea, and a pair of Homeric metaphors suggests that the oars of a ship move in much the same way" (Dougherty, 2001: 31). The metaphors also extend to the weaving of cloth, for a "gendered opposition of sailing and weaving reflects the over-arching structure of the whole poem" (ibid: 32).

We do not hear first hand of Odysseus until we meet him building his raft. Dougherty thus suggests that while he has no ship he has no poetic voice, reinforcing the link between sailing and poetry, for if he has no ship to get off Calypso's isle, then his story will never be told. There is a further metaphoric association with trade and the movement and travel of oral poetry. And with the movement of poetry come questions of poetic truth and authority that shape the concept of the narrative.

Sea travel operates at the level of poetics in *The Odyssey* to constitute a notion of narrative that is about travel and is itself mobile and flexible. In other words, *The Odyssey* is a travel narrative that also describes a new way of conceptualising the relationship between travel and narrative (ibid: 62).

This change is in the form of a break from the land. "The song of the Sirens, confined to their island, celebrates a narrative of the past, a story well known and told in order each time. Odysseus, however, literally fused with his ship, represents a new model for narrative, one that travels far and wide just like its hero" (ibid: 73). Odysseus' narrative is mobile and flexible, a sign of the fluidity of his travels, which is adaptable to different contexts. A flexibility verging on falsehoods, yet "emblematic of the journeys of narrative itself … *The Odyssey* is not at all the story of a journey but rather, radically, the journey of a story" (ibid: 75). The impact *The Odyssey* has had on maritime literature is huge. As Peck writes, "the whole cluster of ideas at the heart of *The Odyssey* is echoed in the entire tradition of sea literature" (2001: 12). It has also profoundly shaped the narrative structure of much subsequent literature about life on land.

However, to talk of narrative in uniform terms can be problematic. Herman Melville for example, makes use of the sea's movement to challenge "the constructed nature of a maritime narrative … in telling a sea story he seems to work actively to frustrate any sense of coherence, dissecting the narrative form that he is using, and denying us any sense of certainty, such as certainty of meaning" (Peck, 2001: 110).

Sea-changes

The sea has changed substantially in the Western imagination. The eighteenth-century saw a huge interest in ocean voyage narratives. Widely read and translated within Europe, they had a huge impact on eighteenth century imaginative life (Carlson, 1986; Edwards, 1994). In general though, the sea was disregarded as a necessary but unwanted hardship, there to be traversed not described. The sublime sea of the late eighteenth century was the first time the sea was seen as more than a stage, a philosophical space championed by Edmund Burke. It would seem likely that these changes were partly due to the widespread maritime exploration of the time. As the seas were charted and became 'known', or at least 'knowable', they thus came to be seen as a more positive element (Carlson, 1986).

There followed the Romanticism of the nineteenth century, the glorification of untamed wilderness and man's dominance over nature. "It was this [romantic] sea that Turner painted – a sea of pure, unpent nature at its wildest and most magnificent. He gave pictorial representations to the mysterious and hallucinogenic sea of Coleridge … and to the gale-swept, mighty sea of Byron" (Raban, 2001: 15). Yet, by 1817, Jane Austen in *Sanditon* presented this Byronic sea as a banal cliché, in an acerbic warning to all who write about the sea. As sail gave way to steam, Joseph

Conrad recorded the changes and their effect on man. Furthermore, Conrad gave each geographic sea its individual character, be it the estuarine Thames or the Pacific. The seas of Conrad were a "place where people live; not a vacancy, or a symbol, or apostrophised Ocean, or even the ocean – but a named and measured stretch of sea with its own distinct face" (Raban, 2001: 20). As such, I am at fault in addressing the sea as a largely homogenous place, but feel this is a necessary lie for my current purpose.

While Conrad went to sea to escape a land polluted by liberal reform in favour of the regimented and hierarchical order of the ship, Bernard Moitessier set off single-handed around the world in 1968 to distance himself from the consumerism and environmental destruction of the West. While at one time being sent to sea was as good as, if not worse than, being sent to prison, another recent round-the-world sailor was sponsored by Amnesty International as epitomising their ideals of individual freedom and self-sufficiency. Springer traces changes in American literature to "newer scientific thinking, to the technological developments that have diminished certain threatening mysteries, to an idealistic romanticism, to disgust with civilization's failures" (1995: 30). Such changes deserve greater attention than can be afforded here.

Perceptions of the sea

"And heaved and heaved, still unrestingly heaved the black sea, as if its vast tides were a conscience; and the great mundane soul were in anguish and remorse for the long sin and suffering it had bread" (Melville, 2003 [1851]: 255).

One of the most notable and recurring themes in maritime literature is that of anthropomorphic, and often gendered, metaphors. Homer's (1988) "cruel sea" echoes throughout the ages. For Joseph Conrad: "The most amazing wonder of the deep is its unfathomable cruelty" (1946 [1906]: 137). Joshua Slocum is more pragmatic in his perspective. He could almost have been speaking of Conrad when he wrote: "I once knew a writer who, after saying beautiful things about the sea, passed through a Pacific hurricane, and he became a changed man. But where, after all, would be the poetry of the sea were there no wild waves?" (2000 [1900]: 149).

The sea has been explicitly gendered to a degree far greater than the land. "He always thought of the sea as *la mar* which is what people call her in Spanish when they love her. Sometimes those who love her say bad things of her but they are always said as though she were a woman" (Hemmingway, 1952: 27). Much of the symbolism and literature of the sea is particularly paradoxical, the

symbolism listed above often takes the form of dichotomous pairs. As Slocum suggests it is often the 'cruelty' of the sea that draws people and literature to it (from the nineteenth century onwards at least). It may be said that the sea attracts by offering a force greater than the self, a force that as Springer has noted, is both 'saviour' and 'destroyer' to which "no comparable paradoxicality attaches to land" (1995: 2).

It might be claimed that it is the sea's movement and fluidity, as an uncontrollable force, that suggests human agency and anthropomorphic metaphors. The movement of the sea, of bodies of water, has its own corporeal intentionality, figuratively speaking, that elicits certain responses of its own. In literature it is most often of the unknown, far off or deep down. Corporeal or not, we have already noted that places have an operative intentionality that directly relates to the perceptions of bodies. Yet, how does this relate to differing perceptions of the sea? It is certainly an uneasy relationship, for a body can never be whole-heartedly certain of the sea's continuing support, nor forecast its ever changing 'intentions'. While the land can hold us, our bodies and perceptions, the support of the sea is never so stable. Our perceptions can find no similar support or roots. The movement of the sea provides common metaphorical associations as well as containing histories and stories. But it also frustrates and disorientates,

denying any singular perspective and instead reflecting the perceptions and concerns of those who occupy it. Thus, it may be said that the operative intentionality of the sea is such that, as with seasickness, it dominates the corporeal intentionality of the body.

While much prose recycles nineteenth-century iconography, the "sea in twentieth-century poetry is a far livelier and more original place" (Raban, 2001: 33). There has been a general reversal in the use of metaphors in much poetry; beyond metaphors of the sea the sea itself becomes the metaphor. Recall, for instance, Derek Walcott's line "the sea is history". In his rendition of a Caribbean Odyssey, *Omeros*, Walcott (1990) "invokes images of the sea and navigation as metaphors for the poetic process" (Dougherty, 2001: 19). With echoes from Homer, the poet's desk is seen as a metaphorical raft, floating in a sea of words. In such 'metaphoric seas' we may see a literary manifestation of the 'intentionality' of the sea beyond that which is ascribed to the land: the fluidity of the sea has a presence that does not subscribe to the dualistic categories of operative and corporeal intentionality.

Smooth sailing
A phenomenological approach provides a solid grounding from which to approach seascapes. However, its emphasis on being and the perceiving body is not sufficient on its own to give full consideration to the movement and fluidity of the sea and those who travel upon it.

Deleuze and Guattari's notion of a nomad science uses a hydraulic model, in which "flux is reality itself" (1988: 361). It is a vortical model, a model of becoming and of heterogeneity rather than of the stable, constant and homogenous. It creates a space other than the Euclidean geometry of straight lines that never meet. Deleuze and Guattari make the distinction between 'smooth' and 'striated' space. Striated space is ordered and regulated by fixed schemata whereas smooth space allows, or requires, irregularities. It is heterogeneous and resists reproduction and universalising. Smooth space is deeply localised and as such "always occurs as a place – in this place" (ibid: 304). Yet it is a particular kind of place, one that is not purely here, not a pinpoint in space but an unlimited locality that is intrinsically vast yet neither intimate nor infinite. It is characterised by an entire region, a desert or sea, without definite borders[9].

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[9] Like Deleuze and Guattari, W.H. Auden also makes associations between desert and sea. Both are wilderness, outside the city or state (as with Deleuze and Guattari and the opposition between the nomad and war machine and the state and striation of space) in which the individual is free from the evils and responsibilities of the state but also lonely and alienated. The difference between them for Auden is that the desert is dried up, where life ends, whereas the sea has the potential for life (1951: 25–27).

The sea is the epitome of smooth space. It was also the first to be striated, to be transformed "into a dependency of the land, with its fixed routes, constant directions, relative movements, a whole counterhydraulic of channels and conduits" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988: 387). "Maritime space was striated as a function of two astronomical and geographical gains: bearings … and the map" (ibid: 479). The imposition of latitude and longitude created a "space of sites rather than a region of places" (Casey, 1998: 308). However, Deleuze and Guattari also point to a strange reversal, in which the sea regains its 'smoothness', in part through the state and military attempting to gain greater control of the land. The striation of the sea, "the multiplications of relative movements, the intensification of relative speeds in striated space, ended up reconstituting a smooth space or absolute movement … the sea became the place of the fleet in being, where one no longer goes from one point to another, but rather holds space beginning from any point: instead of striating space, one occupies it with a vector of detteritorialization in perpetual motion" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1988: 387).

One should not endorse one type of space over the other. Smooth space is not liberatory. Neither is better or worse, and one requires the other. One may live in the striated space of a city as a nomad and one may striate the smooth space of the sea or desert. "Voyaging smoothly is a becoming, and a difficult and uncertain becoming at that. It is not a question of returning to pre-astronomical navigation, nor to the ancient nomads …" (ibid: 482). To be in smooth space is to be "occupied by intensities, wind and noise, forces, and sonorous and tactile qualities" (ibid: 479). A space of distance not of measure; perceptions based on symptoms and evaluations, not properties; the haptic over the optic. What distinguishes the two kinds of space is the voyages in them.

The inhabitants of smooth space are 'nomads' and to inhabit such a place is not to be at a place, nor a point in place or at the centre of it. Rather, "the nomad is spread throughout the whole region he or she inhabits, as much as here, always on the way between places of this region" (ibid: 304). Contra Heidegger, place and region converge into one, so that the region is itself a place. Singularity is denied by movement and so in talking of seascapes we need not be limited to the point of sea that the boat is in but can understand it as an entire region. For Heidegger, to be in a place is to be contained, but here we can see that to be at sea, in a region, unbounded, is still to be in 'place'.

Smooth space is constituted through 'local operations' and relays of skilled movement, moving both efficiently and intensively,

an intense spatiality experienced through 'voyaging in place'. The nomad goes from point to point but "Speed turns the point into a line" (Deleuze and Guattari 1988: 24) and "although the points determine paths, they are strictly subordinate to the paths they determine, the reverse of what happens with the sedentary. The water point is reached only to be left behind" (ibid: 380). The nomad passes through points along a trajectory, not a sedentary road. That is not to say that the nomad is defined by movement. Rather, the nomad moves by not moving, by waiting with infinite patience. Movement (extensive) is not the same as speed (intensive). The seafarer, the body at sea, need not move to travel, for it is the vessel that moves and carries the body. The nomad is immersed in space, a space localised and not delimited, that is "limitless in the arc of its vanishing" (Casey, 1998: 306) as the landscape or seascape continuously disappears over the horizon, while continuously appearing[10]. The nomad is not continually moving from place to place but moves within a region, always emplaced in an unlimited locale.

Being in smooth space is both body-based and landscape-orientated, the two mediated through direction. Moving in smooth space is not to travel a set course from one point to another as such points are invisible and the path one makes is continuously erased by the sand or waves.

"The sense of direction that results thus arises from a peculiar but potent synthesis of the body and the salient objects of its encircling landscape" (ibid: 306). At sea, this need not mean just 'sea-marks' but also the direction, rhythm and intensity of wind and waves which orientate body and boat. Deleuze and Guattari create a new link between body and place. They add to Merleau-Ponty's emphasis on the kinesthetic body, the experiencing of the aesthesiological body, whereby everything is experienced through one's proximity and relation to the ground or sea. We may, then, see the active sensory engagement, the physical intimacy, of the aesthesiological body, rather than the 'mechanical' kinesthetic body, as being that which is required in enskillment and recovery from seasickness, for the movement of the body is of less importance than the body's sensing of the movement of the sea. "The on of smooth space replaces … the with of sedentary dwelling. For dwelling is here accomplished in travelling. One does not move to a dwelling but dwells by moving" (ibid: 307). Travel as a form of dwelling, and thus of being, breaks with Heidegger's paradigm of settled dwelling. It is not an 'unhomely' or unfamiliar dwelling because of its movement but instead a process of continuous detteritorialization.

The language of the whale

The philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari works against any simple literary interpretation. They do not ask what a work of literature means, but what it can achieve. An example is their reading of *Moby-Dick*: "*Moby-Dick* in its entirety is one of the greatest masterpieces of becoming; Captain Ahab has an irresistible becoming-whale …" (1988: 243). This, I think, deserves a further explanation. First, the rhizome: Deleuze and Guattari seek to displace the common image of the root as something that connects points, often in an evolutionary scheme. Instead, they use the image of the rhizome – a bulb or tuber – which grows multiple offshoots connecting one point to another. While roots plot points in a hierarchy, rhizomes make connections, chart lines between multiplicities: "The tree imposes the verb 'to be', but the fabric of the rhizome is the conjuncture, 'and … and … and…'" (ibid: 25). 'Becoming', is the process of moving between rhizomes, connecting points and moving between and beyond them. "To become is not to attain a form (identification, imitation, Mimesis) but to find the zone of proximity, indiscernablitiy, or indifferentiation where one can no longer be distinguished from a women, an animal, or a molecule" (Deleuze, 1998: 1).

The self is not static as suggested by 'being' but in flux. 'Becoming' is the zone between

multiplicities. A multiplicity, in turn, is not defined by its centre but by its outer relations to other multiplicities. And so, the self may be seen as "a threshold, a door, a becoming between two multiplicities" (Smith, 1998: xxx), of which Captain Ahab is a prime illustration. It is not a literal metamorphism. In becoming, "one term does not become another; rather, each term encounters the other and the becoming is something between the two, outside the two" (ibid: xxx). Through his all consuming and obsessive pursuit of Moby-Dick, Ahab's energies flow or slide towards a state of becoming, a creative, almost demonic, involution. Though it is not a metamorphism, Deleuze still notices physical and figurative manifestations: "the furrows that twist from Ahab's brow to that of the Whale" (1998: 77).

Ahab and Moby-Dick encounter one another at sea. While Ahab is a becoming-whale, he is also a becoming-water. "The sea is … the fluid medium, the agency, the culture upon and within which all these interactions take place. Moreover, it enables and hastens the process of becoming-whale which Deleuze observes in Ahab" (Brydon, 2003: 107). In becoming-water, currents of water and thought combine: "This alignment of human

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10 See Crapanzano (2004) on horizons and the imaginative potential of what lies beyond.

preoccupations with a 'current', a flow, facilitates the transmigration of identity which Melville's narrative dramatizes" (ibid: 108). Melville points to it when he tells us of an "absent minded youth" up the mast looking for whales but lulled into an "unconscious reverie", "by the blending cadence of waves with thoughts, that at last he loses his identity" (2003 [1851]: 172).

"There is no life in thee, now, except that rocking life imparted by a gently rolling ship; by her, borrowed from the sea; by the sea, from the inscrutable tides of God. But while this sleep, this dream is on ye, move your foot or hand an inch, slip your hold at all; and your identity comes back in horror. Over Descartian vortices you hover" (ibid: 173).

Identity is 'liquified', thoughts flow off, 'being' is swept away by the movement of the water and life is borrowed from the sea. The fluidity of the sea allows a fluidity of being such that 'being' becomes 'becoming'. It is through water that Ahab's becoming is facilitated, through following the whale through the oceans, though the circle is never completed. Deleuze asserts that Melville needed to invent a foreign language (we have already noted how he broke with the standard narrative structure), a language of "the OUTLANDISH or Detteritorialized, the language of the Whale" (Deleuze, 1998: 72). A language that embraces the multiple: digressions,

complications, contradictions; in Brydon's words "a language which retains everything in suspension" (2003: 112) with words and thoughts left floating in the sea. We can compare this with our earlier comments regarding the seasickness of Merleau-Ponty, whose kinesthetic body, I suggested, was not sufficient for engaging with the multiple disorientating rhythms of a moving sea. Similarly, the narrative structure of *Moby-Dick* works to frustrate any sense of solidity and certainty. And so, as with the recovery from seasickness by the attunement of the aesthesiological body, so it is with a reading of *Moby-Dick* that one must be attuned to digressions and multiple movements and not simply attempt to reterritorialise the deterritorialized 'language of the whale'.

Perceptions of becoming

Becoming is something between and outside two terms. This 'something' is a pure affect or percept, were a percept may be seen as a 'perception' outside the given quality of any particular thing: "the percept goes beyond the character's perception of the landscape. A percept, says Deleuze, is 'a perception in becoming'" (Smith, 1998: xxxiv). Affects and percepts, contra affections and perceptions, are freed from the restrictions of the normal and the recognisable. For Deleuze and Guattari, the aim of philosophy should be to create new concepts. The power of art

and literature is in the creation of percepts, affects and intensities. Neither should be about representing a pre-existing world but should make new connections and new becomings.

For Deleuze and Guattari there is no being, all life is becoming. Perceptions are deterritorialised and given temporality, they are uprooted and thus able to float. Percepts make visible changes, forces and intensities in the world that are not visible to the human eye but can only be constructed by art. It is in this that lies the importance of literature for understanding the sea and its potential for deterritorialisation. And in its ability to deterritorialise we are once again returned to the nomad in smooth space, the seafarer, and finally the metaphorical association between sailing and poetry, the poet's desk and the sailor's boat: a process of becoming mediated through the fluidity of the sea.

The process of becoming allows us to reconsider two previously opposed terms, those of corporeal and operative intentionality. A phenomenological approach is not sufficient to overcome or fully understand the tension between these two categories at sea, where the 'operative intentionality of place' does not do justice to the sea's movement. In the course of this essay, however, we have seen both anthropomorphic places and people becoming other. We must

recognize the fluidity of the two and their potential for change and difference; places may be 'personified' and people and their narratives may become part of place. The movement of the sea denies any polarised categorisation. As we have seen with Captain Ahab, currents of thought and of water combine, perception itself, corporeal intentionality, is imbued (if not quite drowned) by the fluidity of the sea: body becoming place. Becoming "expresses a power of literature: the power to perceive differently by tearing perception from its human home" (Colebrook, 2002: 136). The telling of a story does not only guide us into place but can create new places, and new ways of perceiving them. The creation of 'new places' is not the creation of place from a 'blank environment' (Weiner, 2001; cf. Casey, 1996) or creation ex nihilo but through becoming, moving from one point to another and becoming something outside the two.

As a final perception of becoming we may invoke the image of Proteus, the Ancient Greek god of the sea, able to assume the form of any aquatic creature. As with *Moby-Dick*, in becoming-animal we are left with something outside the two terms: "the Ocean as pure percept" (Smith, 1998: xxxiv). In becoming-other, the self becomes imperceptible, part of something else, part of the sea. What the percept, or the ocean, "makes visible are the invisible forces that populate the universe, that affect us and

make us become: characters pass into the landscape and themselves become part of the compound of sensations" (ibid: xxxiv). The sea enables becoming and makes visible this becoming-other, it enables us to see not only histories and stories within the seascape but the 'rich and strange': the sea change of people.

Landfall
At sea the land may be seen either as a safe-haven or a source of great danger. Bernard Moitessier described the coast as "a great whore" (1974: 19) ready to seduce the weak.

…I hate landfalls. They upset the normal cadence of things; they alter the very slow inner rhythms a sailor develops after a time away from the dangers of the coast, in the security of the open sea where everything takes its true place, without demanding but also without deception (ibid: 19).

The contrariness of landfalls is also found in *The Odyssey*. The yearning for land and lands' dangers and deception is felt on sighting the isle of Helios, causing Eurýlokhos to cry out to Odysseus:

> Where is your shelter
> if some stiff gale blows up
>   from south or west
>   the winds that break up
>   shipping every time
>   when seamen flout
>   the lord god's will?
>   (Homer, 1988: 231)

Yet, the temptations offered by the land leads to the deaths of all Odysseus' crew. For Odysseus himself, the sea is a barrier to his longed for return home but it is also his only route home. In time though, all sea-voyages must return to land, if they are to return at all. However, this does not necessitate the sea's subordination to the land, as Dubow (2001) suggests.

When Odysseus returns to Ithaca, his raft is metaphorically reincarnated as his marriage bed: mobility is replaced by rootedness. And, in bed with Penelope, he recounts his story chronologically, his return is also a return to a more ordered narrative. Both the journey as a symbol of narrative and narrative conceived as physical movement draw to a close. The act of having travelled gives authority to the story. The story itself gives evidence to the act of travel. "Overseas travel thus leads both to authoritative travel narratives and to identifying travel as the source of narrative authority" (Dougherty, 2001: 66). Much the same may be said of ethnography and anthropology. Landfall, as a return home to order and safety, is often a return to linearity and self-assured certainty; to the verb 'to be' rather than the muddled possibilities of 'and…and…' that do not fit squarely within the striated space of the 'field'.

Odysseus' final task was to walk inland with an oar over his shoulder until someone

asked him what it was he carried, and there to plant it and make offerings to Poseiden. However, in his modern version, Derek Walcott reminds us that "When he left the beach the sea was still going on" (1990: 325). On returning to the stability of the land we must not then neglect the fluidity of the sea [11]. The narrative of *Moby-Dick* never returns to land at all, but leaves the sea rolling on, "as it rolled five thousand years ago" (Melville, 2003 [1851]: 624). The fluidity of the sea should be used to broaden the scope of phenomenology beyond the experience of a lived body in a lived place to a sense of possible, imagined and changing bodies and places. Part of this process is in considering the experience of place through literature and the creation of different kinds of place in literature. Art and literature not only represent places and people, but are emplaced and embodied. They are not attached to the environment but are part of it.

Conclusion
The sea is a place as much as anywhere else. It is not a blank environment or a background to other events but a specific region with its own characteristics, a region that should not be outside the anthropological domain. Merely to argue that the sea is a place rather than a space, though, would be to miss its complexity and its potential. As Mary Oliver's poem 'The Waves' (quoted in Raban, 2001: 508) has it:

> The sea
> isn't a place
> but a fact, and
> a mystery.

The relationship between the sea, bodies and literature is a complex one which is above all fluid. Odysseus' narrative is mobile and flexible as is his journey and the seas he travels. The sea contains histories and stories, it can disorientate the body, and it provides no support for perception but mirrors the concerns of those who perceive it. As the narrative of *Moby-Dick* and the symbolism of the sea reflect, its continuous movement makes it a contradictory, often paradoxical place; it is both untamed wilderness and anthropomorphic consciousness. Perceptions of the sea are as fluid and variable as the sea itself, currents of thought and water combine.

While literature and perceptions of the sea are culturally and historically dependent, the language of the whale is not. Nor are percepts of the sea. The emphasis given in this essay to deterritorialised becoming and percepts – rather than grounded being and perceptions – allows for conceptualising the fluidity and

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[11] Lefebvre's (1992:2000) writing on space and rhythm – analysis further illustrates the ties between land and sea, ties also seen in complex ecological relations.

unboundedness of the sea. It may also be of value in re-examining the anthropology of landscape. Phenomenological accounts of landscape most often deal with the familiar, but even for people who live and work in the same place for generations "there are always other places (real, or encountered through hearsay, story and imagination)" (Bender, 2001: 6). There is a need to broaden our sense of landscape and movement beyond the 'familiar'. By drawing on the creative and imaginative potential of people and art we can begin to understand the place of that which is not seen but 'sensed' in a landscape or seascape. Thus percepts, rather than perceptions, a transcendental empiricism that denies the possibility of any single grounded world and insists instead on multiplicities and difference, may be put to good use in exploring creative processes of emplacement.

The recent focus on perceptions of place and landscape, such as Ingold's (2000) ecologically minded phenomenology, has done a great deal to open up the environment to anthropological attention. However, the philosophical underpinning of such work continues to assume that knowledge can be founded on experience or phenomena. Deleuze saw such assumptions as impossible; he also saw impossibility as liberating. His "radicalisation of phenomenology" (Colebrook, 2002: 6) enables creative thought and experimentation outside fixed structures or experience; rather than fixed being or identity: difference and becoming. Not a single voice of authority but a cacophony of different and differing voices: minor literature not major. According to Ingold's 'dwelling perspective', the inescapable condition of existence is of an organism in an environment and its exploratory movement through the world. For Deleuze though, there is no discrete organism, or an environment through which it can amble, but only machines. "An organism is a bounded whole with an identity and end … A machine, however, is nothing more than its connections; it is not for anything and has no closed identity" (ibid: 56). Every aspect of life is mechanic, be it body, boat, sea or art; it exists only insofar as it connects with others. As such, the land cannot be divorced from the sea. Neither can be separated from the interaction of other machines, or the creative processes that help constitute them. Furthermore, we need not be limited by the territorialised categories of corporeal and operative intentionality, of body and place, but can move outside such concepts and see how one thing may become another. In the case of seascapes, the sea's movement and fluidity actively prompts an expanded concept of place, of becoming not being, dwelling in movement and the deterritorialisation of grounded and static categories.

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