

**“Traveling South”: The Sixth Biennial Conference of the
International Society for Travel Writing
23-26 September 2010**

Conference Abstracts

Thursday, 23 September

Panel Session 1.1: Early Modern Travelers

Michael Moran, University of Georgia: “Making Travel in 1585 Virginia Possible: Thomas Hariot as Navigator, Linguist, Cartographer, and Travel Writer”

In 1585, Sir Walter Raleigh sent his first colony of Virginia under the governorship of Ralph Lane. While Raleigh’s first colony had many purposes, one of the primary ones was to travel about the Outer Banks of current-day North Carolina to evaluate its potential as a colony and to contact the native tribes. Raleigh’s primary assistant, Thomas Hariot, one of Renaissance England’s most important mathematicians, used his mathematical background to learn art of open-sea navigation and teach it to Raleigh’s sea captains; worked with two natives, Manteo and Wanchese, to learn the basics of their language, develop a system to phonetically record its words, and produce a now-lost Algonkian-English dictionary; and worked with the artist John White to produce the first accurate survey and maps of the region. After returning to England in 1586, Hariot wrote *A Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia*, which was published three times by 1590. The most important edition was published by Theodor de Bry in that year, and it recounts information that Hariot and the other colonists had gathered throughout their travels. This paper demonstrates that Hariot made an unknown land known and open for future travel. His *Briefe and True Report* presented the findings of that travel geared to interest future colonists in travelling there.

Sarah Rude, North Dakota State University: “Constructing a Birthplace for King James: Early Modern Conceptions of Scotland through Travel Writing”

In 1603, English interest in Scotland rose dramatically. Not only did the northern neighbors speak oddly and drink too enthusiastically, the Scots also supplied the next monarch of England itself. At least three English writers were curious enough about the homeland of their new king that they journeyed to Edinburgh to observe for themselves life in the north. Sir Anthony Weldon, in his *A Perfect Description of the People and Country of Scotland* (1617), finds Scotland to be an appalling place, with its hostile environment only worsened by the “stinking people that inhabit it.” One year later, John Taylor relied on the kindness of strangers while writing his *Penniless Pilgrim* and found the Scotch so hospitable that he added an epilogue defending his book from those who “suppose I flatter.” In the same year that Weldon found the Scots abominable, Fynes Moryson wrote a seemingly neutral account that nonetheless makes Scotland an alien place compared to England. The attitudes toward England and Scotland found in these three representative

accounts are also traceable in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. Unlike Taylor, Weldon, and Moryson, Malcolm in *Macbeth* flees south after his father the king is killed. After resting and gathering an army of Scottish supporters and English militia, Malcolm brings the orderliness of the South back to northern Scotland. Following the ideas expressed in Moryson and Weldon, only under the Southern influence that Malcolm asserts can the Scotland of the play become a noble, honorable place.

Panel Session 1.2: African American Travelers

James Levernier, University of Arkansas at Little Rock: "William Wells Brown's *Three Years in Europe* and the Polemics of the African-American Anti-Slavery Travel Narrative"

Less well known than his landmark autobiography, novel, and drama, but equally important, is William Wells Brown's book *Three Years in Europe, or Places I Have Seen and People I Have Met* (1852), in which Brown recounts his travels in France, Ireland, England, and Scotland as an American delegate to the Peace Conference of 1851 and as one of America's most effective abolitionist lecturers in Europe. *Three Years in Europe* is a landmark of American literary history. Indeed, as Brown himself states in the book's preface, it is the first "history of travels" written by a "Fugitive Slave," and for this reason alone it possesses "novelty enough" to secure "the attention of the reading public." Nonetheless, this important and, in many respects, unique work of travel literature has been almost entirely neglected by contemporary scholarship. This paper illustrates Brown's use of conventions from nineteenth-century travel narrative to counter popular pro-slavery arguments, specifically those of pseudo-scientific "racialism" and economic determinism, which insisted that slavery was an inevitable part of the social and natural order. In so doing, Wells creates a form unique to travel writing of his day – what might be termed "the African-American anti-slavery travel polemic."

Gary Totten, North Dakota State University: "The Cultural Work of Travel in Zora Neale Hurston's *Tell My Horse*"

Marguerite Helmers and Tilar Mazzeo note that "[h]istorically, the implied presence of the body has been one of the ways in which travel writers guarantee[d] the authenticity of their accounts. ... and assured their readers that their representations have a source in ... 'eye'witness' experience." Sometimes this visual emphasis erases the seeing body to focus on the gaze itself, an ideological apparatus of empire which is assumed to originate in a white male body. Yet an erasure of the body is less likely to occur for women travelers of color whose actual bodies can be read as visible signs of difference. In *Tell My Horse* (1938), Zora Neale Hurston utilizes her visibility (as a woman of color) and mobility (as a traveler) to insure cultural preservation, connecting her status as a black female traveler to the transmission of stories and cultural practices in Haiti. As she gains cultural competency through travel, she also acquires knowledge and expertise to act as an agent of preservation. Initially, she notes that she does not know "people and Creole," but as she revisits Haiti, she learns Creole and becomes a cultural insider. Because the movement of her physical body functions as a trope for the ways in which bodies of cultural knowledge

might be transmitted and preserved, Hurston challenges historical notions of black travel by re-imagining slavery's Middle Passages as routes that mobilize black bodies to participate in cultural preservation.

Tim Youngs, Nottingham Trent University: "Strange but familiar": African American Narratives of Travel

Journeys are central to African American experience and literature. Yet, despite the growth of scholarly activity in travel writing studies, there has been comparatively little attention paid to African American travel writing. This relative neglect seems due to three main factors: the low esteem in which travel writing continues to be held; the predominance in the African American canon of narratives of forced or economically determined movement; and the uneasy relationship between postcolonial and American Studies that has seen scholarship on postcolonial travel writing tending to avoid a focus on African American texts. Rather than occupying a marginal role, however, travel writing has been central to African American literary expression. Its generic indeterminacy makes it a powerful vehicle for the African American protagonist whose mobility constitutes a refusal to be fixed. Both the movement that is narrated and the porosity of the genre's borders complement the fluidity of the self whose (re)construction is in process through travel.

Friday, September 24

Panel Session 2.1: British Travelers Abroad

Jeanne Dubino, Appalachian State University: "From Sinister Sun to Fiery Fun: In the Heart of Sunny Kenya, 1864-1970"

One of the most common images in the several hundred books that British adventurers, explorers, administrators, hunters, and tourists wrote about Kenya is the sun. Far from being represented as the heart of darkness, Africa, as it appears in British colonial texts about Kenya, is sunny. Surveying a variety of texts written between the end of the nineteenth century and into the 1960s – adventure books, travelogues, novels (mysteries and romances), colonial critiques, autobiographies (by both colonizers and colonized), and more – this presentation considers the varying representations of the sun. The sun is threatening, romantic, malevolent, and cheerful; and suggestive of possibilities, promise, fun, vacation, and more. The rise and fall of the sun can be used as a metaphor to express the rise and fall of the British imperial presence in Kenya.

M. Soledad Caballero, Allegheny College: "To be British in the United States: Fanny Kemble and Amelia Murray's Travel Narratives to the U.S. South"

Published within ten years of each other, British actress Fanny Kemble's *Journal of a Residence on a Georgia Plantation* (1863) and the lady-in-waiting to Queen Victoria the

Honorable Amelia Murray's *Letters from the United States, Cuba, and Canada* (1856) both depict a U.S. South and address the question of slavery. While Kemble's narrative details her residence with her husband Pierce Butler, a young Philadelphian who inherited a large plantation in Georgia with over two hundred slaves, and the horrors of that reality during 1838-1839, Murray's narrative to the U.S. South offers not only an apologetic rationale for slavery, but also a celebratory statement about the usefulness and functionality of the institution for "the negro." Given that both texts were published right before the U.S. Civil War, and that both texts have as a context England's involvement in abolitionist movements around the world since the abolition of its slave trade (1807) and slavery (1833-1834), this paper examines Kemble's and Murray's works in conjunction with each other and considers how they frame the black body at a crucial moment not only in U.S. history, but in British history, particularly concerning Britain's place in an international abolitionist movement.

Panel Session 2.2: Hearts of Darkness

David Espey, University of Pennsylvania: "Heart of Darkness as Travel Destination"

One might expect that Joseph Conrad's nightmare voyage to the Congo would have discouraged travelers from venturing south to revisit that perpetually troubled center of Africa. On the contrary, *Heart of Darkness* has inspired numerous readers to undertake their own rites of passage and follow literally in Conrad's footsteps. These literary travelers provide an unusual kind of reader response to Conrad's novel. They travel the country with and through the book and relive the journey as a painful but enlightening ordeal. They also echo Conrad's political and moral critique as well as his metaphors of darkness and ironic illumination. This presentation briefly examines how *Heart of Darkness* has inspired literary travelers – from Andre Gide and Graham Greene to V.S. Naipaul, Paul Theroux, Helen Winternitz, Jeffrey Tayler, and many others – to follow, borrow from, and update Conrad in their own travel non-fiction (as opposed to fiction). This paper anchors these observations in its author's own ill-fated journey to the Congo in 1966. It also considers whether any of these post-Heart of Darkness travel books might please Chinua Achebe, who criticized Conrad's novel as a "traveler's tale" and objected to its negative simplifications of Africans.

Ulrike Brisson, Worcester Polytechnic Institute: "Into the Heart of Darkness: The Rhetoric of Peril in Travels to the Southern Hemisphere"

From a Euro-American perspective, journeys to the south have always had two ambivalent sides: paradise and purgatory. By contrasting the works of two globe-trotters from different centuries – Ida Pfeiffer in the nineteenth century and Carl Hoffman in the twenty-first – this paper explores the degree to which the rhetoric of peril prevails over the rhetoric of bliss when travelers visit southern continents such as Africa, South America or Asia. The paper explores how the experience of danger has changed between the nineteenth and twenty-first centuries and identifies what elements of that experience have remained constant; how dangerous the journeys really were and how much danger was rhetorically added to spice up the text. It asks how the rhetoric of peril about travels to the

South produces the South as an Other, and questions what might be the socio-political implications of this literary production. Thus, the paper investigates the discursive creation of the South as a place of darkness, chaos, and disease – in short, a place outside of Euro-American control, which because of its otherness is perceived as both powerfully fascinating and terribly frightening.

Adrian S. Wisnicki, Fordham University/Birkbeck College, London: “Nyangwe and the Problem of Victorian Geography”

This paper develops an innovative analysis of Victorian imperial practice by highlighting the constitutive, but often elided, role of non-Western place in the development of Western geographical discourse. It suggests that the discipline of geography as deployed by Victorian explorers to Africa – because it involved successive transitions from ideology to material endeavor to discourse – resists cultural and ideological grounding, and so must be understood as the collective product of Western imperial endeavor *in* the global South. The paper focuses on the relations between three Victorian explorers and the local African inhabitants of Nyangwe, a small trading village on the right bank of the Lualaba River in eastern Congo which, in the 1870s, occupied a pivotal place in British discussions of African geography: it was the “furthest point” reached by any explorer and so came to mark where the “darkness” of Africa began. The “darkness” *beyond* Nyangwe, and so *of* Africa, emerged from a pre-existing, irreparable disjunction between Victorian epistemology and local African ontology. Nyangwe was neither the first nor last place where this disjunction surfaced, but the successive representations of its inhabitants – over the 1870s, *and* from the archive to the published record – highlight how “incomprehensible” local circumstances could predetermine what might otherwise seem the most deliberate and directed of imperial inscriptions.

Panel Session 2.3: American Identity and Mythos in Travel Writing

Donald Ross, University of Minnesota: “Limits to Growth: Military Travelers to the Western United States in the Early 1800s”

This paper examines published accounts by United States military expeditions from 1804 to 1844 to the Louisiana Territory and beyond, as well as Jedidah Morse’s 1820 official report to the U.S. War Department, and outlines their assessments of the political, geographical, and economic potential of the regions. For more than a generation, the writers of these accounts made a compelling case that the greater Louisiana region beyond a hundred miles or so west of the Mississippi river was unsuited for expanding and replicating the familiar settlement patterns that had developed in the Ohio River valley for half a century. The West was described as being adequate for the Native Americans who lived there and for those few men who traded with them for furs and hides. By analogy, it would, therefore, be adequate for Indian tribes that were being systematically driven from the east. Then around 1840, as American attention and acquisitiveness pointed further west, the western Louisiana territory was presented as little more than a pass-through zone used for trails to Santa Fe and Oregon. Only at a

later stage was the possibility for American exploitation of the intervening plains tentatively advanced.

Katherine Ledford, Appalachian State University: “Depictions of Violence in Travel Writing of the Early Nineteenth-Century Mountain South”

In the half century before the United States' Civil War, traveling through the mountains of the American South was an uncomfortable, time-consuming, and often frightening experience. This paper examines travelers' anxieties about region, class, and national identity through their depictions of violence in the southern Appalachian Mountains. Violence takes many forms in these narratives, from lived experience to fantasy. Travelers tell of anticipating violence, witnessing violence, avoiding violence, and constructing imaginary violence as they move over the mountains. Sometimes the mountainous landscape itself is the source of imagined violence; sometimes the inhabitants of the mountains are the source of imagined violence. Always, readers learn more about the travelers – their prejudices, predilections, and fears – than about the U.S. Mountain South they purport to show. Travel writing of the early nineteenth-century U.S. Mountain South functions on both a personal and symbolic level in depictions of violence, placing lived and imagined experience within a context of region, class, and national identity.

Maria del Pino Santana Quintana, Universidad de Las Palmas de Gran Canaria: “Loss and Nostalgia: The Little Known America of Bill Bryson”

Bill Bryson's *The Lost Continent: Travels in Small Town America* recounts a journey home at the end of the eighties that is highly motivated by nostalgia. Taking his native Iowa as a point of departure, Bryson hits the road and travels all over little-known American spaces, revisiting the places that constituted his childhood holidays. At the wheel of his mother's old Chevrolet and with a set of dusty road maps, the traveller moves in space and time to discover a “new but oddly familiar” country. Bryson's travelling memoir is built around two complementary actions: the traveller's attempt to recapture childhood experiences and his search for the American “middle-class Elysium.” Bryson's own perception of an idyllic town is developed through what Steve Clark defines as “a double media framing of TV and cinema.” This paper draws attention to Bryson's self-perceived decline in the American landscape and small-town values. The industrialisation of the rural sites, the bold intrusion of shopping malls, the “hamburger emporia,” and the paranoia of American television frustrate Bryson's vision of homeland. The paper also reconsiders the role of memory at the time of reassembling the American myth and the existing reality. In doing so, it analyzes the function of nostalgia in the process of mythologizing ideal sceneries.

Panel Session 2.4: Confronting Colonialism and Slavery in Travel Writing

Laura Dassow Walls, University of South Carolina: “Southern Exposure: Humboldt and the South Carolina Naturalists”

The German traveler and naturalist Alexander von Humboldt was best known for his five-year expedition to the Americas, from 1799 to 1804, which he capped with a visit with Thomas Jefferson at the White House; less well known are Humboldt's ongoing connections with South Carolina naturalists. In his writings on Mexico, Cuba, and Venezuela, Humboldt places the American South in a comparative context, often criticizing the United States for its racial politics even as he lauds the progress of the American republic and the enterprise of the nation's explorers and naturalists. The American South is thus deeply contested space in Humboldt's work, and his praise for republican freedom and equality, together with his condemnation of Southern slavery, put his Southern admirers in a difficult bind. The contested nature of Humboldt's Southern exposure focused particularly on South Carolina, where several of Humboldt's most important U.S. friends and allies – including John Bachman, Francis Lieber and his son Oscar, John McCrady, and John Charles Fremont – argued in both local and national contexts over the import for the American South of Humboldt's global comparative research on race, environment, and political economy. This paper provides general outlines of Southern perspectives on Humboldt's work through the South Carolinians who attempted to reframe his research either as favorable to Southern interests or as condemning the South altogether. It will also examine Humboldt's particular associations with the University of South Carolina.

Shizen Ozawa, Kansai University: “Returning Only in Order to Depart: On V. S. Naipaul’s *Middle Passage*”

V. S. Naipaul’s *The Middle Passage* (1962), an account of his “returning” journey to the five Caribbean “colonial societies,” constitutes a major turning point in his long literary career. Whereas his earlier novels depict his homeland Trinidad ironically, but with a certain warmth and sympathy, from this travelogue on the world depicted both in his fictions and non-fictions turns much bleaker. Correspondingly, his authorial persona changes from that of a Caribbean writer to a controversial chronicler of chaotic postcolonial conditions. This paper considers how the writing of *The Middle Passage* brought about these changes, focusing in particular on the cultural position of the narrator. First, it analyzes how status as an insider is textually constructed and gives authority to what the writer has to say. It then examines the narrative tension that Naipaul’s two cultural positions create. The very knowledge about the regional issues inevitably raises the question as to his cultural affiliation. This uncertainty prompts Naipaul to demarcate the boundaries between the cultures all the more clearly, thereby resulting in his strident criticism of the Caribbean islands. This tension becomes a significant new theme in Naipaul’s subsequent works.

Jonathan Burgess, University of Toronto: “‘If Peoples and Cultured’: Colonialist Vision in Bartram’s *Travels* and the *Odyssey*”

In the course of their wanderings, both Odysseus and William Bartram fend off monsters and employ pseudonyms. Bartram’s *Travels in Georgia, North and South Carolina, East and West Florida* (1791) is full of classical allusions, reflecting the author’s education: Bartram's naming of a den-burrowing tortoise after Polyphemus, for instance, suggests

that he knew the *Odyssey*, probably in translation. But more important than the possibility of Homeric influence is how the ancient epic and the early American travel narrative are mutually revealing on a shared theme: the cultivation of indigenous territory. Odysseus' own story of his wanderings, like Bartram's *Travels*, is a first-person travel narrative. Travel literature is characterized by a mixture of genres, and both Odysseus and Bartram employ a variety of discourses in their narratives. Yet the balance between their narrative modes varies greatly. Since Bartram was a naturalist with a great interest in indigenous culture, naturalist description and ethnography are much more prominent in his text. Odysseus occasionally describes nature, and his curiosity sometimes takes an ethnographic turn, but his story features adventures in a supernatural world. In the both tales, however, colonialist discourse rather abruptly and problematically arises. Odysseus' admiring description of "Goat Island," in Book 9 of the *Odyssey*, and some of Bartram's most rapturous descriptions of Florida, particularly of the Alachua plain, turn into visions of the potential exploitation of natural resources.

Panel Session 2.5: Discourses of Travel

Hongbing Zhang, Fayetteville State University: "Traveling West: Guo Songtao's Discursive Excursions on the Steamship Journey from Shanghai to London"

For the Chinese in the nineteenth century, the steamship and the West – referring Europe and North America – was an ambiguous vehicle and a contested space. On the one hand, the steamship was a tool of Western imperialism that the Chinese fiercely resisted, and on the other it was a vehicle of material modernity that the Chinese would very much like to obtain from the West. This paper examines steamship travel in the global context of the historical relationship between the East and the West, and between "tradition" and "modernity," by focusing on the travel account written by Guo Songtao, the first Chinese resident diplomat to the West, on his 1876 maritime journey from Shanghai to London. Songtao's travel account initiated a new style of global travel writing in modern China. His pioneering voyage out into the social and political modernity of the West shows some unmistakable signs of the persistence of traditional Chinese literati landscape travel, where travel was taken to be a process of discovering the cultural and literary inscriptions that had turned a sight of natural space into a landscape. For Guo, however, the landscape exists only at the end of his maritime journey, and the peoples and nations seen and encountered on the journey are merely part of the natural world not yet inscribed in culture.

Mila Gabruck, University of Calgary: "The Mythology of the South of France in Travel Writing and Popular Culture"

This paper explores the use of stereotypes of the South in both travel writings and popular culture, such as songs, movies and advertisements. The South of France is a region that has been mythologized by both French nationals and foreigners. Peter Mayle, in his very successful autobiography *A year in Provence* (1989), has contributed to the stereotypes about this area. In most of his subsequent work, such as *Provence A-Z* (2006), he continues to explore what makes the region and its inhabitants unique, and decidedly dif-

ferent from the rest of the French population. In many ways, he paints the South as an exotic place. He emphasizes the natural beauty of the area and its food culture, making the South a must-go destination. Many films, from Marcel Pagnol's *Marius, Fanny and Cesar* trilogy in the thirties to the recent *Bienvenue chez les Ch'tis* [Welcome to the Sticks] (2008), by Dany Boon, rely heavily on stereotypes comparing the South to the North. In exploring the topic of stereotypes in the South, the paper questions whether such stereotypes are evolving or are remaining the same, and what it is that makes the South of France unique, both as a location and as a national term.

James Schramer, Youngstown State University: "Frightening Fecundity: Southern Flora and Fauna in the Writings of Crevècoeur, Bartram, Trollope, and Raban"

In *Hunting Mister Heartbreak: A Discovery of America* (1990) – the title refers to Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, whose surname can be translated as heartbreak – Jonathan Raban recreates the immigrant experience of Crèvecoeur and the millions who followed him to America. In his wanderings through America, Raban lives for a time in a cottage in Polecat Hollow in Guntersville, Alabama, where nature is omni-present and ominous. Raban is not alone in imagining the American South as a Conradian "Heart of Darkness." From Crèvecoeur's description of a slave left to die of thirst and exposure in an iron cage suspended from a tree limb, to William Bartram's illustrations of alligators, and Fanny Trollope's descriptions of the muddy and malarial backwaters of the Mississippi, the land and waters of the South have often been described as sites of rampant vegetative growth and, at their most extreme, as sites of savagery and horror. Through the texts listed above, this presentation examines the South as a locus for deviance, hybridity, mutation, or decay.

Saturday, September 25

Panel Session 3.1: American Women Travel Writers in the Early Twentieth Century

Shealeen Meaney, Russell Sage College: "They do run true to form': The Subjectivity Trade and Women's Travels of the 1920s"

In the United States of the 1920s, a combination of forces, including new technologies of travel, an expansion of women's social roles, and the explosive growth of consumer culture, together opened up new territories for women, both literally and figuratively. Unsurprisingly, narratives of women seeking to redefine themselves through travel burgeoned during the era, and these narratives often served as opportunities for newly mobilized women to make sense of and respond to the contradictions at the heart of the new womanhood and the new economy that they explored in their travels. Drawing upon three cross-country road narratives from the 1920s by Beth O'Shea, Letitia Stockett, and Winnifred Dixon, this paper examines women's negotiations with these contradictions, focusing on the narratives' implicit assumption that only through a conscious rejection of consumer subjectivity and the socially sanctioned routes of nationalist tourism can women claim travel as a means of transforming their personal lives and public identities.

Aware that the flourishing culture of modern tourism threatened to undermine the claims to adventure, independence, and authenticity that they risked their safety and reputations for, the travelers/writers discussed in this paper set bold agendas for themselves. Nevertheless, these narratives reveal complex ideological investments in both consumer subjectivity and the market's revisions of traditional domesticity

Michele Willman, University of North Dakota: “Negotiating Identity, Locating Subjectivity in Anne Morrow Lindbergh’s Travel Narratives”

This paper examines the way in which Anne Morrow Lindbergh represents herself in her travel narratives *North to the Orient* and *Listen! The Wind*, exploring the placement of Lindbergh’s physical body in the narratives to determine how she creates an identity for herself as a female travel writer and how she gains subjectivity in the texts. Lindbergh’s conflicting self-portrayal as a moderately competent and occasionally inept professional illustrates the difficulty of modern women travelers to gain a place in the world of travel adventurer and writer. Lindbergh’s position in her travel narratives is complicated by the fact that she travelled with her famous aviator husband, Charles Lindbergh. She was in the media spotlight due to her position as his wife and as well as to her position as a female aviator. Her obligations extended to both her husband and the commercial aviation industry. Despite being influenced by these outside forces, Lindbergh’s narratives position her as both a traveler and a writer in her own right. Though at times her work downplays her own involvement in her experiences, particularly in the technological aspects of travel and aviation, clearly she had many roles to play. Her negotiation of these roles, examined through how she places her body in position to the people and objects around her, reveals crossroads of identity and subjectivity for Lindbergh as a female traveler, writer, and aviator.

Rebecca Feind, San Jose State University: “‘So You’re Going South’: Clara E. Laughlin’s Vision of European History in the Southern United States”

Clara Elizabeth Laughlin (1873-1941) was the author of over 30 books, an uncounted number of periodical articles, and the founder and owner of the Clara Laughlin Travel Service. During her career she was known as “The So You’re Going Lady,” a moniker derived from her volumes about European travel for Americans. Her 1940 book *So You’re Going South* is a primary source for understanding published mid-twentieth-century perceptions about the historicity of the South. From Laughlin’s point of view, the histories of Europe’s presence in the Southern states are tourist destinations. This paper describes the relationship between Laughlin’s correspondence with Houghton Mifflin and the resulting travel guide, to serve as an example of how Southern history has been understood and promoted to tourists. The correspondence between Laughlin and Houghton Mifflin reveals how the agenda for her travel series was created and the level of autonomy she had in choosing geographic regions. Examples from this correspondence and excerpts from the text reveal Laughlin’s interpretation of Southern U.S. history as a site of European intervention, invention, and re-interpretation. The correspondence also reveals the state of U.S. travel guides available in the 1920s and 1930s, as the available

texts and potential competitors are discussed by Laughlin and Houghton Mifflin editor Ferris Greenslet.

Panel Session 3.2: The Trope of the American South in Travel Writing

Christopher Nesmith, University of South Carolina, Columbia: “O Magnet-South’: The Transnational South in American Travel Writing for Children, 1815-1890”

This paper examines new findings and texts that push the limits of the present understanding of the role of traveling to the “South” in the popular imagination of nineteenth-century Americans. In the early nineteenth century, American writers for children, following a long tradition, adopted the genre of the foreign travel narrative for the purposes of educating a younger audience, and in so doing helped inform their readers’ identity as national subjects. However, since most of these writers were from the North and wrote for a Northern audience, they found it difficult to incorporate the South into the larger narrative of national identity. Instead, many of them chose to fold the southern U.S. into a larger transnational South defined by the common plantation culture of the greater Caribbean basin. Thus the “South” was, for them, another foreign destination for their fictional travelers, and their Northern readers could sustain a national “American” identity and culture distinct from the South in reading these travel works. But after the Civil War, in an effort to create a new sense of shared identity and community that transcended regional differences, these travel works emphasized the “romantic” South, a destination to be savored and enjoyed for its distinct exotic otherness and foreign flavor. Facilitated by the cultural transformation in the purposes of travel and a burgeoning tourist infrastructure, this “foreign” otherness was reincorporated into the national narrative as a source of pleasure and entertainment.

John Cox, National Endowment for the Humanities: “Manners and Mystery: Flannery O’Connor, Travel Literature, and the American South”

This paper examines the relationship of regional writing about the American South to travel literature by focusing on the work of Flannery O’Connor. O’Connor regularly discussed the centrality of place to her fiction, and she often emphasized the need for writers to know their locales deeply and intimately. Furthermore, O’Connor was clearly aware that many readers approached her fiction as a form of travel literature, hoping to glean some insight into a society and culture not their own; in fact, she seems to have encouraged this type of reading by incorporating many forms of travel into her works and frequently including an educated outsider with whom a northern urban reader might be tempted to identify. However, O’Connor also seems to question the extent to which an armchair reader/traveler can come to know a character, a people, or a region, for her outsiders frequently suffer defeat or humiliation or simply do not comprehend the situations into which the author has placed them. O’Connor’s awareness of the difficulties involved in representing an Other, and readers’ tendencies to misread these representations, has much to say to the field of travel literature as a whole. O’Connor sought in her fiction a powerful blending of what she called “mystery and manners,” the combination of a certain universality and an intense focus on the local. Surely more

traditional travel writers, too, hope to accomplish a similar fusion of the specific and the general, at the same time that they often promise readers access to a foreign culture while showing that their attempts to represent this culture will always fail.

Russ Pottle, Misericordia University: “*Suttree* and the South: A Critique of Post-War American Travel”

The travel term applied most frequently to Cormac McCarthy’s novel *Suttree* is “wandering.” The novel is often compared to James Joyce’s *Ulysses* or to mythic stories or texts that characterize travel as non-linear, fragmented, or disjointed. However, this comparison overlooks other depictions of travel in *Suttree*. Linear, purposeful, and even commercial travel appear aplenty, underscoring not simply the diffuse behaviors of the novel’s protagonist and of his cohort of underclass brawlers, but signaling the seismic social and economic shifts that were taking place in the United States during the early 1950s, in which the novel is set. Although these changes are presented through novelistic devices, their description is based solidly in actual places and historical events in the American South. McCarthy’s text critiques both the protagonist’s Faulknerian self-odyssey and the historical development of an American pre-eminence in commerce-driven travel. In human terms, the novel suggests that the cost of any travel is so high that, at the end of any journey, but particularly journeys in the American South, the traveler is concerned mostly with surviving the effects of travel, not with drawing wisdom or gaining knowledge from it.

Panel Session 3.3: Constructing Identities

Miguel Cabañas, Michigan State University: “From South to South: The Exotic in 20th Century Mexican Travelers”

Beginning in the 1990s, Mexican travel books focused on nostalgic travel within Mexican geographical spaces, such as *Oaxaca, crónicas sonámbulas* [*Oaxaca, Sleepwalking Chronicles*] (1994), by Fernando Solana Olivares, *Crónica de una oriunda del kilómetro X en Michoacán* [*Chronicle of a Native of Michoacán, Km. 10*] (1995), by María Luisa Puga, and *Campeche, imagen de eternidad* [*Campeche, Image of Eternity*] (1996), by Silvia Molina. However, other travelers feel the urge to represent the world of the unknown for their contemporaries. *Vislumbres de la India* [*Glimpses of India*] (1995), by Octavio Paz, and *Crónicas africanas* [*African Chronicles*] (2001), by Ignacio Padilla, insert Mexican identities in specific historical moments during the twentieth century: Paz presents postcolonial India after independence, and Padilla narrates his experiences during apartheid in Swaziland, South Africa’s neighboring country. While Paz focuses in the postcolonial condition of India and its similarities with Mexico, Padilla focuses on showing the complex interplay between (post-)colonialism and globalization. Both narratives use the trope of exoticism to contrast difference and to recreate identities. In its discussion of these texts, this paper explores questions of historicizing the concept of exoticism; of contemporary travelers continuing in the exotic tradition of travel writing; and of defining the exotic in our own time.

Jennifer Hayward, College of Wooster: “El Lord Metalico: Nation and Narration in Thomas Cochrane’s 1859 *Narrative of Services in the Liberation of Chili, Peru, and Brazil from Spanish and Portuguese Domination*”

Admiral Thomas Cochrane (1775-1860) travelled south as an escape from the persecution – legal, political and professional – he believed he had suffered as a Scotsman attempting to make his way through English hierarchies. In what seemed, to him, the liminal space of South America, he reinvented himself as an English hero, leading successful naval campaigns during the wars of independence in Chile, Peru, and Brazil. In an attempt to shape his own legacy, Cochrane himself published his 1859 *Narrative of Services in the Liberation of Chili, Peru, and Brazil from Spanish and Portuguese Domination*, a unique (not to say bizarre) amalgamation of travel narrative, naval adventure, defense against past accusations, and demand for payment for past services. Ever since, Cochrane has claimed a central role in the English cultural imaginary – but, unsurprisingly, these Cochrane myths tend to elide his Scottish identity, appropriating him as “English.” This paper reads Cochrane’s self-construction against the Cochrane idolatry circulating through travel narratives by his contemporaries, particularly those by Maria Graham (1824), John Miers (1826), and William Bennet Stevenson (1825), as well as against the less flattering representations in Chilean texts. Integrating theories of genre, gender, and national identity in travel writing with the historical context of Scottish pan-Atlanticism, the paper demonstrates ways that South America was produced by Scottish travellers as a space of imaginative and historically generative potential – as well as the ways that involvement in South American independence shaped British national identity in turn.

Jennifer Ritterhouse, Utah State University: “‘Discovery’ and the Politics of Regional Identity in Jonathan Daniels’s *A Southerner Discovers the South*”

When Jonathan Daniels’ *A Southerner Discovers the South* was published in the summer of 1938, critics hailed it as “the Best Book on the Modern South.” Respected historian William E. Leuchtenburg, who was then a fifteen-year-old growing up in Queens, rushed to get a copy and, nearly sixty years later, he would credit Daniels’ book for challenging his “simple conceptions” of the South and convincing him that the region was “a land” he wanted “to get to know.” Yet *A Southerner Discovers the South* is little read today. This paper reintroduces Daniels’ travel narrative to modern readers and explores the interplay between preconceived intellectual and political analysis and “discovery” within its pages. Although Daniels carried many assumptions and biases along with his maps and “letters of introduction to the best – the very best – people,” he was also affected by his travels, particularly what he saw and heard about racial oppression in the Deep South. By the time he wrote *A Southerner Discovers the South*, he had become more self-conscious about his identity as “a Southerner” than ever before and suggested in his dedication that his father Josephus, who had been a leader of North Carolina’s disfranchisement campaign, was “A Better Southerner” than he, as a white Southern liberal, could ever be.

Sunday, September 26

Panel Session 4.1: Travel to Italy

Katarina Gephardt, Kennesaw State University: “The Imperial Center and the Southern Periphery: Mid-Victorian Travel Narratives on Italy”

In the wake of the revolutionary year 1848, British travel writers were compelled to move beyond the established tourist perception of Italy as a graveyard of a glorious past and the stock images that it generated. The political turmoil in the country led travel writers to shift their focus from the past to the present, from images to dialogue with the Italian voices that were emerging in defense of the Risorgimento. British commentary on Italy was tinged with anxieties about increasing industrial competition from the Continent and by the Irish famine that did not reflect favorably on the British government. As a result, British travelers focused on Italian institutions, which inspired a critical examination of their own country’s position in Europe, even as they constructed Italy as a partially modernized periphery of the continent. This paper examines the rhetorical strategies that contribute to the reimagining of Italy in the British travel writing of the late 1840s and early 1850s, when increasing modernization and political developments changed the cityscapes of Italy and called for comparisons with British institutions. In order to illustrate these new patterns of representing the European South, the paper draws on examples from several travelogues from this period: Charles Dickens’s *Pictures from Italy* (1846), James Whiteside’s *Italy in the Nineteenth Century* (1848), James Macfarlane’s *A Glance at Revolutionized Italy* (1849), William Baxter’s *The Tagus and the Tiber* (1852), and Edmund Spencer’s *A Tour of Inquiry through France and Italy, Illustrating their Present Social, Political, and Religious Condition* (1853).

Sharon Ouditt, Nottingham Trent University: “Travelling South of Naples”

“Europe ends at Naples and ends there quite badly,” said the French traveler Augustin Creuzé de Lesser in 1806: “Calabria, Sicily, all the rest belongs to Africa.” This paper explores the idea of Italy’s South as liminal to Europe, and thus a “problem” to the Center and North of Italy. Regarded through the lenses of British travelers as diverse as Henry Swinburne, Craufurd Tait Ramage, Norman Douglas, and Charles Lister, the area south of Naples is analyzed for its representations as culturally barbarous, shattered by earthquakes, governed by delinquents, and, in sharp contrast, the seat of ancient civilizations which formed the very heart of Europe. Whether the south should be rescued from its “backwards” state or championed for its values that seem to challenge the “futile complexities and disharmonies of our age” (Douglas) are questions that are debated directly and indirectly in accounts that attempt to confront the troubled sublimities of the physical, social and historical landscapes of Southern Italy.

Minjeong Kim, Binghamton University: “Oriental Italy: D.H. Lawrence’s *Sea and Sardinia*”

In the early nineteenth century, when men composed the majority of British travelers, Italy was figured as a charming woman. Development of the tourist industry, however, made an Italian tour broadly accessible to women, children, and the members of the middle classes, and feminine Italy began to be represented as a land of sexually threatening men. In the early twentieth century, Italy came to symbolize passion and spontaneity and was applauded for its overflowing life energy. By D.H. Lawrence's time, the popularity of a continental tour and the plethora of travel writing penned by professionals and non-professionals alike worked together to firmly establish the stereotype of the industrialized and cold north and the agrarian and warm south. This paper examines how Lawrence's view of Italy, which ostensibly corrects or at least nuances the Northern traveler's sweeping gaze, in fact reinforces the a-historicization of the Southern European country. It demonstrates that, by separating Italy into two parts, one which accords to the British imagination of Italy and the other which does not, Lawrence projects onto the latter the fear of the unknown other. By doing so, Lawrence conflates the South with the East. Lawrence understands Sardinia from a colonial perspective, according to which Sardinia is not only pre-industrial but also primitive, a space almost indistinguishable with the dark, mysterious Orient.

Panel Session 4.2: Theories and Forms of Travel

Philip Krummrich, Morehead State University: "Heading South: The North-South Trajectory in Travel Writing"

Several well-known pieces of travel writing describe epic North-South journeys: among others, these include *The Old Patagonian Express* and *Dark Star Safari*, by Paul Theroux; *Old Glory: An American Voyage*, by Jonathan Raban; and *The Roads to Sata: A 2,000-Mile Walk through Japan*, by Alan Booth. This paper analyzes several such accounts in an effort to describe and analyze the special dynamics of heading south through changing climate, vegetation, landscape and customs. It explores question of what the South may mean as a destination and how the South actually reached at the end of the trip matches up with the imagined South that motivated the travel in the first place.

Jeffrey Melton, University of Alabama: "From a Buick 6: Automobiles and Travel Writing on the American Open Road"

This paper discusses post-World War II American travel writing and considers how motor vehicles have influenced travel experiences. It does not provide close readings of any single text; rather, the intention is to suggest the potential for reading travel narratives in direct reference to specific vehicles and in an interdisciplinary context with American road films, an art form that has been more assertive in exploiting the role of automobiles. The paper thus seeks to place literary narratives in that context. Robert Pirsig's philosophical novel *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* is discussed in reference to Peter Fonda, Dennis Hopper, and Terry Southern's film *Easy Rider*; Jack Kerouac's novel *On the Road* with Callie Khouri and Ridley Scott's film *Thelma & Louise*; and William Least Heat-Moon's autobiographical travel narrative *Blue Highways* with Alexander Payne and Jim Taylor's film *About Schmidt*.

Christopher M. Keirstead, Auburn University: “Strangers to Themselves: In-the-Footsteps Travel Writing and the Self-Invention of Identity”

The quintessential “in between” genre – one that, to adapt theorist Tzvetan Todorov’s language, “becomes visible – lives – only by its transgressions” – travel writing has always existed in a kind of unique generic border zone, a form of “creative non-fiction” that spans truth and invention. Occupying an already impressionistic landscape that one does not so much recover as re-invent, in-the-footsteps travel writing highlights in uniquely penetrating ways the sorts of fictional strategies and border identities that make travel writing so dynamic and productively unstable. This paper analyzes three contemporary examples of the genre: Bruce Chatwin’s *In Patagonia* (1977), Caroline Alexander’s *One Dry Season: In the Footsteps of Mary Kingsley* (1990), and Jon Krakauer’s *Into the Wild* (1996). Early on in their journeys, the authors of these texts find themselves confronting “gaps” or mis-directions in the itineraries and stories of their predecessors, places where, quite literally in some cases, they as authors have no place to go. Each text approaches these gaps with a different mode of narrative intervention. Each text thus asks what kinds of knowledge travel, and the inscription of travel, create and propagate. The truth in travel writing, they reveal, lies in its fictions.