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UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

Department of English

**The Maritime Supernatural of Frederick Marryat,
William Clark Russell and William Hope Hodgson**

by

Gerarda Dorothea Mezina Jonk

Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

January 2017

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

ABSTRACT

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**THE MARITIME SUPERNATURAL OF FREDERICK MARRYAT, WILLIAM CLARK RUSSELL AND WILLIAM
HOPE HODGSON**

Gerarda Dorothea Mezina Jonk

The ambition of this project is to demonstrate the cultural and literary importance of the maritime supernatural of nineteenth-century literature. Addressing literary manifestations of the experience of being haunted at sea, I both expand and adjust the work of key scholars of maritime literature and history, who prioritize adventure narratives over the supernatural and focus on what they argue is the real experience and impetus of seafaring, ranging from labour to adventure to empire-building. However, ghosts, legends and the supernatural are equally indispensable to the real experience of seafaring. This thesis traces the maritime supernatural as a response to the anxieties arising from the imperial, religious and technological formations of the nineteenth century.

Chapter one constructs a theoretical framework based on shipboard life and labour and the uncanny. Working within this frame, chapter two considers three key elements of the maritime supernatural – supernatural actor, haunted space and haunting environment – demonstrating the particular ways in which this literary genre overturns maritime lore and challenges norms and conventions.

This leads to analyses of works of three popular sailor-authors, Frederick Marryat (1792–1848), William Clark Russell (1844–1911) and William Hope Hodgson (1877–1918). These three authors, well-known in their own time, are now often overlooked in studies of maritime literature, mostly because their narratives do not have the literary quality of canonical works. However, their contemporary popularity does not only indicate their writings resonated with their audiences; their

apparent lack of literary quality highlights the immediacy of their concerns. Frederick Marryat's *The Phantom Ship*, serialized between 1837 and 1839, seizes the supernatural element in order to interrogate Christianity. After a hiatus in the mid-nineteenth century when no new maritime supernatural narratives were published, William Clark Russell essentially revived the genre with *The Death Ship* in 1888. Russell's nostalgic tale both expresses a longing for the past and anxiety for the future of shipboard labour. By the early 1900s, William Hope Hodgson's early weird fiction gives a new spin to the genre, remythologising the sea into modern tales that reflect contemporary crises of maritime representation. This draws to a conclusion that complicates the notion of the maritime space as unproblematic site of nostalgia, modernity, religion or empire, and shows that a serious consideration of the maritime supernatural genre enriches the current discourse of maritime literature.

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DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I, *Gerarda Dorothea Mezina Jonk* declare that this thesis and the work presented in it are my own and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research.

The Maritime Supernatural of Frederick Marryat, William Clark Russell and William Hope Hodgson.

I confirm that:

1. This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;
2. Where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;
3. Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;
4. Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;
5. I have acknowledged all main sources of help;
6. Where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;
7. None of this work has been published before submission.

Signed:

Date:

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Introduction

This thesis began with a fascination for monsters of the deep. Legendary creatures captured in nineteenth-century literature were to be the subject of this dissertation. This literature expresses a longing for a past to which it became ever more impossible to return. The potential of an unnatural ocean suggests tangible and inexplicable literary sea monsters abound in literature. Searching for monstrosity in the maritime space, and recalling a story I was told in childhood, I found the Flying Dutchman. Of all creatures found at sea, man surely is the most monstrous and cruel. The story of a Dutch captain, hard-set on sailing around the Cape of Good Hope whatever the weather, failing to observe religious days, disregarding the wishes of his men, which results in eternal damnation for both captain and crew, became the basis of this thesis.

The physicality of the maritime environment tends to produce equally physical ghosts. The ocean is a site where contrastive themes like the ordinary and the extraordinary, the real and the unreal, the natural and the unnatural abound. This thesis engages with these themes in order to understand how nineteenth-century maritime literature approaches the visceral nature of haunting at sea. Throughout this thesis, “visceral” is used synonymous to physical, and as the opposite of ephemeral or metaphorical. The Flying Dutchman is the embodiment of the maritime space itself. He is not a mere wisp of a spirit; like his environment, he is tangible and constant, yet tempestuous and unreal. He haunts the imagination of many sailors, both on and off the page, bringing death and destruction to any who are unlucky enough to cross his path. He embodies anxieties about national identity and seafaring ability at a time when technological advancement gradually superseded human labour. These anxieties are contrasted here with the often-used but little investigated phrase “nostalgia for the age of sail”.

The Flying Dutchman himself is not the subject of this thesis, however. That is to say, this is not a study of the Flying Dutchman legend, tracing origins, developments and incarnations of the legend through European literature. In other words, creating a historiography of this particular legend, is not the aim of this thesis. Rather, the Dutchman legend is used here as an instrument for

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exploring the British maritime experience in nineteenth-century literature. Invocations of the supernatural at sea that are not Vanderdecken, the Flying Dutchman, also find their place in this thesis, as they share elements and narrative effects. The main primary texts studied here are *The Phantom Ship* (1837–39) by Frederick Marryat and *The Death Ship* (1888) by William Clark Russell – novels that are directly based on the Dutchman legend – and *The Ghost Pirates* (1909) by William Hope Hodgson, which follows a similar narrative framework but is not based on any existing maritime legend. The maritime supernatural originates mainly in maritime folklore, and found its way to a wider public through novels written by authors who knew their subject from direct professional experience.

Although Marryat, Russell and Hodgson were never at the bottom of the hierarchical shipboard ladder, their writings were nevertheless informed by an active interest in the labouring seafarer's life and tribulations on board ships. Frederick Marryat (1792–1848) started his naval career at age 14 as a midshipman or junior officer, eventually reaching the rank of captain. Though not a labouring seaman, also called a hand, who was part of the forecastle fraternity (the shipboard community comprised of the labouring sailors from green hand to old tar, but not officers), Marryat wrote the sea from his own experience. William Clark Russell (1844–1911) also went to sea at age fourteen, joining the merchant service, also as a midshipman but never reached the rank of captain. Andrew Nash has noted that, although midshipmen were higher in rank than common sailors, Russell criticised the treatment of these junior officers in the semi-autobiographical novel *The Romance of a Midshipman* (1898). A midshipman was 'put to do all the dirty work aft. He scrubbed the deck, cleaned the brass-work, slushed the mast, painted the boats, but I cannot find that the captain ever taught him navigation'.¹ William Hope Hodgson (1877–1918) joined the merchant service at thirteen, starting an apprenticeship in 1891 and working his way up from cabin

¹ William Clark Russell, *The Romance of a Midshipman* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1898), pp. 164–65, quoted in Andrew Nash, *William Clark Russell and the Victorian Nautical Novel: Gender, Genre and the Marketplace* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2014), p. 17. Subsequent references to Nash are from this edition and are given in parentheses.

boy to third mate.² Hodgson outlined his feelings toward the merchant navy in an 1905 article 'Why I am Not At Sea', lamenting the sailor's lack of agency in his own life, a life he describes as 'comfortless, weariful and thankless'.³ Life on board was hard, for crew as well as junior officers, exploited for their physical labour by a harsh master. The experiences of these authors as young boys, although they were officers in training, might have been not very different from the experiences of the actual forecastle crew.

1.1 Yarn-spinning

Their direct experience with the forecastle crew and shipboard life exposed these sailor-authors to maritime yarns and legends, some of which they later adapted into a multitude of novels. Yarns, stories told during periods when work was slow or after watches had ended, are based on sailors' own seafaring experiences. Yarns can be distinguished from other literary narratives in two ways. Firstly, yarns contain practical advice that pertains particularly to the seafaring profession. This is the case both in real life as well as in literature. The practical advice of yarns can be applied immediately, as the yarn's events tend to reflect on the current situation on the ship. Second, and this pertains particularly to literature but derives from real-life shipboard storytelling, the circumstances in which yarns are delivered consistently parallel the events of the narrative. The dissemination of these legends on ships relies on the practice of yarn-spinning, a form of storytelling on board ships that draws on the experience of the teller.

Marcus Rediker, discussing yarn-spinning in his 2014 study *Outlaws of the Atlantic*, describes how 'practical information, often about the treacherous art of survival so necessary of workers trapped in precarious conditions of life' spreads across the forecastle crew in the form of yarns.⁴

² Brian Stableford, 'Hodgson, William Hope (1877–1918)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/56875>, accessed 13 April 2016].

³ Peter Tremayne, 'Introduction' to *Masters of Terror 1: William Hope Hodgson* (London: Corgi Books, 1977), p. 10.

⁴ Marcus Rediker, *Outlaws of the Atlantic* (Boston, MA.: Beacon Press, 2014), p. 12. Subsequent references are to this edition and are given in parentheses as (Rediker, *Outlaws*, page).

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Sailors' yarns travelled across the globe, and 'helped create cosmopolitan community in the age of sail' (Rediker, *Outlaws*, 10). This body of maritime lore was continuously added to by new yarn-spinners who enriched the stories with their own idiosyncratic experiences in similar, yet slightly different, circumstances. Maritime yarns shared among the forecastle crew had their particular, practical uses. By spinning yarns to one another, sailors share their knowledge. Yarn-spinning was fundamental in the training of green hands, who were introduced to the seafaring profession with narratives based on older sailors' own experiences. Aside from sharing experience, the phrase "to spin a yarn" also has fantastical, marvellous and incredible elements to it. It implies that the teller is relating events that cannot possibly be true, yet their insistence on their own direct experience with the narrated events compels the listener into believing in the supernatural himself.

The yarn at sea, argues Rediker, ultimately united seafaring labourers into one single community of shared experience. Rediker's interpretation of yarns and their practical usefulness is a romanticised version of history, despite his insistence that he studies the reality of seafaring. The fact that many seafaring superstitions and yarns disparage sailors from various nationalities is in itself evidence of the opposite. For example, the legend that Finnish sailors are wizards able to control the weather surfaces often in both fiction and non-fiction, and measures include solitary confinement of the sailor until the weather improves. These yarns and practises challenge Rediker's thesis of harmonious shipboard community. Fletcher S. Bassett dedicates a chapter to 'Storm-Raisers' in his 1892 *Sea Phantoms* and notes that 'perhaps no one could, in the opinion of the seaman of a century ago, raise a wind so effectually as a Finn' and lists several examples from maritime literature and lore as evidence.⁵ On a more global scale, Asian or African seamen, called lascars, were seen as a threat to the (white) British seafaring workforce in the nineteenth century and continue to be seen as such in the present day, as these men were willing to work for lower wages than Western sailors.⁶ While experience was shared among sailors from different origins, it

⁵ Fletcher S. Bassett, *Sea Phantoms: or, Legends and superstitions of the sea and of sailors in all lands and at all times* (Chicago: Morrill, Higgins, 1892), p. 106.

⁶ See Jonathan Hyslop, "'Ghostlike' seafarers and sailing ship nostalgia: the figure of the steamship lascar in the British imagination, c. 1800–1960' in *Journal for Maritime Research* (2014); Jesse Ransley, 'Asian Sailors in

is implausible that they created a global community that united sailors of all nationalities and backgrounds.

Rediker builds his argument on the function of sailor yarns on Walter Benjamin's 1936 essay 'The Storyteller', which suggests that the trading seaman and the agricultural labourer were the ultimate storytellers, but that storytelling itself has become a lost art.⁷ These storytellers were cosmopolitan or domestic, relating stories either picked up in distant places or those that relate local tradition and folklore. Rediker, building on this foundational idea, overlooks Benjamin's assertion that real storytellers have become rare and archaic, and imperturbably identifies characteristics of the story as told by Benjamin's storyteller that illuminate the sailor's yarn. Rediker then chronicles how various canonical literary from Shakespeare's *The Tempest* to Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* were inspired by their authors' alleged interactions with seafarers and their yarns. The relationship between literature and yarns is more refined than Rediker describes. A narrative inspired by a yarn is different from one that takes a yarn as subject matter and develops it into a novel. Through yarns, legends such as the Dutchman's circulate the globe ambiguously but insistently, appearing in different guises in different places. Yarns that are developed into novels form a particular genre that is different from novels that are inspired by, but do not necessarily rely on, maritime tales. This thesis addresses the yarn as constitutive of a specific literary genre and considers how these yarns are revised at different moments in the long nineteenth century.

Rediker's notion of yarn-spinning as the origin of a global seafaring community implies a similar, almost supernatural ability of yarns to improve sailors morally. Through a collaborative, conscious effort a community is created that shares values of equity and honest labour. This notion is echoed in other critical work on the maritime yarn; both in Hester Blum's 2008 *The View from*

the Age of Empire' in *Journal for Maritime Research* (2014); Leon Fink, *Sweatshops at Sea: Merchant Seamen in the World's First Globalized Industry, from 1812 to the Present* (2011); David A. Chappell, 'Ahab's Boat: Non-European Seamen in Western Ships of Exploration and Commerce' in *Sea Changes: Historicizing the Ocean* (2004); Matthias van Rossum, 'Lost in translation? Maritime identity and identification in Asia under the VOC' in *Journal for Maritime Research* (2014).

⁷ Walter Benjamin, 'The Storyteller' in *The Novel: An Anthology of Criticism and Theory, 1900-2000* ed. Dorothy J. Hale (Malden, MA.: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), pp. 362–78; pp. 362–63.

the Masthead and Margaret Cohen's 2010 *The Novel and the Sea* the yarn-spinning labourer emerges as morally superior because of his outsider's perspective. Blum calls this perspective the 'sea eye' which unites 'manual and intellectual labor' in the figure of the sailor-author.⁸ Cohen does not directly mention the practice of yarn-spinning but her discussion of the compleat, or perfect, mariner, who perfected his craft through theoretical and practical application, also presents the seafarer as the perfect commentator.

These interpretations of yarns and the community of labourers that originates from them imply an unshakeable confidence in the seafarer's craft – even in troubling times, it is the fictional sailor's ingenuity and ability to take control of the escalating situation that relativizes events at sea as well as on land. This again is a romanticised but widely accepted version of reality. This thesis attempts to show a less romanticised reading of the figure of the sailor, showing that anxiety about the sustainability of craft did feature in maritime literature. This anxiety surfaces through the invocation of the spectral. The practical yarn and the supernatural yarn can be seen to converge throughout the nineteenth century to express contemporary anxieties, from religious questions to the state and future of shipboard labour.

Yarn-spinning as a form of storytelling and a way of validating experiences and apparitions is not only an important narrative feature. The act of rewriting the legend into popular fiction available to a wide, land-based audience is also a form of yarn-spinning with its own particular use. Forcing yarns through the medium of the novel to an audience of one rather than many, Rediker argues, authors of novelised yarns reduce the rich, multi-layered yarn to a mere story. Rediker does not consider the fact that many of these novels, although they were not primarily aimed at sailors, reached a much wider audience than a yarn could within a global community of seafarers. Aimed at an audience of arm-chair sailors, the yarn-turned-novel has indeed lost its practical usefulness, but for readers on land the novelised yarn was of a different use from its use at sea. On ships, the

⁸ Hester Blum, *The View from the Masthead: Maritime Imagination and Antebellum American Sea Narratives* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2008), p. 3. Subsequent references are to this edition and are given in parentheses.

yarn might play an active part in survival because of its immediate applicability, but in novelised form on land, it could be transformed into a tale about morality, religious criticism or national identity. Fictitious sailors' idealised characteristics, heroism and superb seafaring skills represent an ideal or warning to the landed reader.

While the yarn-spinner himself might still be an experienced seafarer, the land-based audience was less versed in the ways of the sea. Although the exact readership is difficult to trace, some injunctions have been made regarding readers of maritime fiction. Blum has established that her first-person non-fictional narratives in the early-nineteenth century were initially read primarily by fellow professional sailors and later in the century started to appeal to (and be written for) a land-based audience too (Blum, 5). Marryat, also writing in the early-nineteenth century, wrote fiction which might have appealed to fellow sailors but, despite (or because of) his extensive use of maritime terminology, fascinated other readers too. Marryat's sea novels were read by 'grown men and women'; an indiscriminate and widespread audience.⁹ He enjoyed a substantial readership; his first novel *Life of Frank Mildmay, or The Naval Officer* (1829) 'was a literary and financial success'.¹⁰ His work was often translated into different languages and later in the nineteenth century, theatre plays based on his novels were performed both in Britain and abroad, giving a good indication of Marryat's popularity.¹¹

Russell, writing in the last third of the nineteenth century, when novel reading had become a predominantly female activity, published his first maritime tale *The Wreck of the 'Grosvenor'* in 1877. The combination of romance and maritime adventure ensured a wide appeal, and a contemporary review of a next novel, *An Ocean Free-Lance*, predicted this new style would be 'devoured by boys and girls, and by such sailors and Marines as may be fond of story-books' (Nash,

⁹ Oliver Warner, *Captain Marryat: A Rediscovery* (London: Constable, 1953), p. 14.

¹⁰ J. K. Laughton, 'Marryat, Frederick (1792–1848)', rev. Andrew Lambert, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, May 2009 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/18097, accessed 13 May 2016].

¹¹ Agnes Andeweg, *De Vliegende Hollander en Terneuzen: Van internationaal symbool tot lokale legende* (Vlissingen: Den Boer en De Ruiters, 2015), pp. 53–55. Subsequent references are to this edition and are given in parentheses. All translations are mine.

84).¹² The audience for novelised yarns was large. Russell's sea stories were a 'critical and commercial success', retaining a 'substantial popular readership into the twentieth century' (Nash, 62; 131). Hodgson's popularity is more difficult to trace. Although he was (and still is) well-known among connoisseurs of horror stories, and announcements and reviews of his books were published in local newspapers, Hodgson's work was not adapted into theatre plays nor did it seem to appeal to a widespread audience of all ages. Contemporary reviews do note the quality of Hodgson's writing but, like H. P. Lovecraft in his 1927 seminal essay on the weird supernatural, lament the fact that this skilled author is relatively unknown.¹³

Although the maritime supernatural genre will be discussed in more detail in chapter two, I will begin outlining some parameters. The narratives discussed here are a subgenre of maritime literature – stories where the main action takes place at sea. It would be logical to assume supernatural elements are simply added to create maritime supernatural literature. This would accommodate, for one, stories like that of the *Mary Celeste* and similar abandoned vessels that are not necessarily supernatural. Supernatural explanations are almost gratefully given to these mysteries. The appearance of these abandoned ships is unexpected and in their drifting, unsupervised by human eyes and hands, there is a sense of uncanny automatization and agency.

These are elements that can constitute a ghostly tale, and indeed, these real-life mysteries have served as inspiration for suspenseful fiction that leans towards the supernatural. Arthur Conan Doyle's short story 'J. Habakuk Jephson's Statement' (1884) is a good example of this – though ultimately the mystery of the disappearing passengers and crew of the *Marie Celeste* is revealed to be the work of a racially motivated and systematic murderer, the tale has supernatural overtones to do with archaic, tribal witchcraft. This story in itself is not a maritime supernatural narrative for two reasons. Not only is the apparently unnatural mystery of the inexplicable deaths explained, it gives no attention to how these events affect the sailors' life and labour taking place on the ship. This maritime element of 'J. Habakuk Jephson's Statement' is not crucial to the plot;

¹² *The Spectator*, 1881.

¹³ H. P. Lovecraft, *Supernatural Horror in Literature* 1927 (New York: Dover Publications, 1973), p. 82.

the narrative could also take place in a stagecoach or a train. The supernatural is found in arcane African cultures, and gestures to a wholly different discourse from what is at stake in this thesis. In the maritime supernatural genre, then, both elements – the maritime and the haunted – are of equal importance to the narrative logic.

It should moreover be noted that the authors writing the maritime supernatural genre tended to write mainly maritime adventure fiction. That is to say, the majority of their fictional literary output followed the genre conventions of maritime adventure fiction without a prominent or decisive role for the supernatural. The maritime adventure novel, or ‘exotic picaresque’, suggests Cesare Casarino in *Modernity at Sea*, is not even really about the sea: ‘their true interests lie elsewhere’.¹⁴ The central focus of most maritime adventure fiction ‘remains on what is to be found beyond the sea, that is, on the adventures of discovery and contact that the exotic landscapes and natives on the other side of the ocean and at the end of the voyage are bound to offer’ (Casarino, 9). Marryat is the one author to whom this statement could apply, but in no way does this statement speak to Russell’s or Hodgson’s work, where often no ‘other side of the ocean’ exists. Yet even in Marryat’s fiction, the maritime space determines the narrative logic.

Casarino’s work focuses on the fiction of Herman Melville and Joseph Conrad and argues that these highly important canonical works are ‘autarchic and self-enclosed narrative units and detailed as multifaceted and tension-ridden universes’ (Casarino, 9). He suggests a strict dichotomy between sea and land, and argues that Melville’s and Conrad’s writings uniquely represent a certain kind of nineteenth-century labouring ocean. Casarino’s work is aimed at ways of knowing, but turns to the canon in unreflexive ways to study the absolute knowledge of sea. While Casarino’s study is valuable and insightful, it is exactly this kind of statement about these kinds of canonical works that my thesis aims to nuance. It does so by focusing on works by lesser-known authors, arguing that the value of these novels does not only depend on whether or not they are about the sea. Even when the sea appears secondary to the narrative focus, it still facilitates

¹⁴ Cesare Casarino, *Modernity at Sea: Melville, Marx, Conrad in Crisis* (Minneapolis/London: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), p. 9. Subsequent references are to this edition and are given in parentheses.

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character development or travel necessary for events to play out elsewhere. The sea is still fundamental to the narrative logic.

Even if their main output was maritime adventure fiction, at some point Marryat and Russell engaged with the supernatural. Hodgson's literature, on the other hand, is mostly concerned with the supernatural in various forms, and rarely considers the world without spectres or monsters. It gives rise to the question why they did so. While the simple answer might be that it works, or in other words, writing ghosts ensured good sales figures and pleased the reading audience, it appears that certain contemporary issues can only be addressed through an engagement with the same supernatural legend. While often, as will be seen, the same themes are addressed maritime adventure narratives as well as maritime supernatural stories, the outcome of these engagements is usually less satisfactory in the ghostly stories than in the adventure stories. It appears that ghosts prevent the loose ends from being tied up.

Recent scholarship of maritime space has been concerned with the relationship between the human and the natural, constructions of, and engagements with, the natural world by humans. This thesis juxtaposes the human with the natural world turned unnatural. It focuses on the human experience of the maritime space (not its metaphorical, psychologised construction) and questions the relationship between the human and de-humanised human, and the interruption of the shipboard world and culture by the spectral. This interruption implies a link between maritime supernatural narratives and the Gothic genre. In this thesis, following Fred Botting's suggestion that by the nineteenth century, the Gothic was dispersed among a variety of genres, I distinguish between the Gothic of eighteenth-century fiction and Victorian supernatural stories.¹⁵ While authors of the maritime supernatural genre perhaps borrowed atmospheres, tropes and techniques from the Gothic, they present us with a type of horror that is more subtle than demonic half-humans and malevolent castles. The appropriation of Gothic themes without writing a Gothic

¹⁵ Fred Botting, *Gothic* (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 116.

text allows authors of the maritime supernatural genre to engage with contemporary issues around religion and national identity.

1.2 Maritime history and maritime literature

A robust research culture has formed over the last thirty years on the maritime novel and its relationship with maritime culture and seafarer-storytellers. This thesis is speaking within this research culture, and adjusts it to accommodate a particular genre of novelised spectral yarns. It aspires to refine broad brushstrokes drawn by these scholars. Rediker's *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*, published in 1987, takes an interdisciplinary approach to reconstruct the early-eighteenth-century common sailor's world. Looking at diverging disciplines including linguistics, anthropology, economics and maritime history, Rediker studies the formative period 1700 to 1750, when the British and American shipping industries were expanding but can still be considered in nearly the same terms. John Peck's 2001 *Maritime Fiction: Sailors and the Sea in British and American Novels, 1719–1917* looks at maritime literature in its historical context. In order to look at the effect of British and American success at sea on life ashore as well as show how these successes shaped the political, social and cultural characters of these nations, Peck close-reads maritime and land-based literature from Defoe to Conrad.

A more focused study is Blum's 2008 *The View from the Masthead*. Blum shows that studying antebellum American sea writing – generally first-person non-fiction – gives insight into changes of American self-perception throughout the studied period. Finally, another study important here is Cohen's 2010 *The Novel and the Sea*, where she traces the development of the novel alongside maritime adventure fiction through close-reading American, British and French literature from Defoe into the twenty-first century. These studies provide a wealth of knowledge key to an understanding of the multifaceted genre of supernatural maritime fiction. What follows is an analysis of key elements of their respective studies: seafaring authors, land-sea relationship, and epochs of maritime literature. This thesis largely follows their multidisciplinary approach but

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simultaneously challenges their epoch-making and interpretations. Maritime scholarship, as has been pointed out, has the tendency to romanticise the maritime space. In attempts to avoid this, they often create a rhetorically high argument that overlooks the original intention of the fiction at stake. I will point out these moments and attempt to fill the gaps left in maritime scholarship.

Nineteenth-century maritime fiction benefits from its authors' direct professional experience with the maritime environment and is steeped in maritime jargon. It aims at describing seafaring and life on board accurately and realistically. The reality of life on board, no matter how fantastical the events of the narrative, was key to their success. In *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea* Rediker argues for a serious examination of the real figure of the labouring sailor Jack Tar himself, his world and experiences; in other words, he aims to seriously consider history from the bottom up. Rather than take further once again the study of the 'romance of the sea', the romanticised maritime environment hitherto subject of maritime studies, Rediker intends to focus on 'the reality of seafaring' in order to give attention to hitherto 'misrepresented or omitted vital segments of the seaman's experience', which is collective, international, and harsh.¹⁶ While his study is a useful starting point, Rediker's focus on the reality of seafaring is scattered by his broad and idealised interpretations of his material.

In his attempt to deromanticise the sea, Rediker reromanticises it through his imposition of a collective fraternity on the seafaring world. His study identifies the importance of considering the reality of seafaring but misses an opportunity to contextualise the romance of seafaring. Authors intending to write about the sea from their own direct experience and to write it realistically, wrote 'romances' in the sense that Robert Louis Stevenson used it in his essay 'A Gossip on Romance' (1882): adventurous narratives that prioritise realistically written incidents rather than idealised tales of morality. Nash notes the discrepancy between the use of the word "romance" in maritime titles and their authors' insistence on the authenticity of their subject matter. He shows that

¹⁶ Marcus Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: Merchant Seamen, Pirates, and the Anglo-American Maritime World, 1700-1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 3; 5. Subsequent references are to this edition and are given in parentheses as (Rediker, *Deep Blue Sea*, page).

Russell's resistance against 'a romanticized – in the sense of falsified – tradition of nautical literature' was substantiated along the same terms as Stevenson's essay on romance which 'calls for an art based on "circumstance" and "incident" rather than character and moral conduct' (Nash, 88–89). Rediker's understanding of the maritime world as romanticised in literature overlooks maritime fiction's mission to write the sea realistically. However, his insistence that seafaring was more than an individual's journey to self-improvement is of considerable importance to this thesis. Seafaring as a communal experience makes a fundamental difference in the understanding of the effect of haunting in this space of labour, as it not only affects the group dynamic of the forecandle fraternity, but crucially interrupts the labour undertaken by this particular community.

The seaman's idiosyncratic experience is also the subject of Blum's study *The View from the Masthead*, where she aims to find a place for non-fictional sea writing in existing discourses on nineteenth-century American literature and culture. She argues for a consideration of the combined manual and intellectual labour that takes place on board ships, as manifested in sea narratives written by working sailors (Blum, 2–3). The labouring seafarer's vision expressed in these non-fictional narratives denotes both 'the experiential vision whose attainment forms the organizing principle of many such narratives' as well as 'the analytical perspective offered by the common labouring sailor' on American life and culture (Blum, 3). This double vision of the experienced sailor, the 'sea eye' already mentioned, who not only shares his experiences with his readership (who were likely to be sailors themselves) but also transcends his immediate area of expertise to show his experiences have 'applications that extend beyond the maritime world' (Blum, 3). Like Rediker, Blum shows that these working men and their narratives are worth studying in their own right. Translated into fiction, Blum's themes in particular are relevant to this thesis, and the double vision of the sailor-author is important in delineating the parameters of this study.

Writings that celebrate sailors' practical skills and experience are also the subject of Cohen's 2010 study *The Novel and the Sea*, in which she overlays the timelines of the development of maritime fiction and of the evolution of the novel. Cohen aims to encourage recognition of

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adventure fiction as a serious genre through a study of the representation of the maritime craft in literature. Craft, as Cohen sees it, are all the elements of what makes a 'compleat mariner', a sailor who had 'at one's disposal the full arsenal of competences, both theoretical and practical, to contend with the marine element of "flux, danger and destruction"'.¹⁷ Her prototype of a compleat mariner, however, is captain James Cook. Cohen uses accounts of the wrecking and subsequent salvage of the *Endeavour* on the Great Barrier Reef to outline the various elements that constitute the mariner's craft. Unlike Blum, whose narratives were written by working sailors, Cohen bases her definition of a compleat mariner on writings by and about an officer, not labouring sailors. Arguing that the 'practical resourcefulness' of a sailor applies to anyone who calls the maritime space their workplace, she does not actually show how maritime craft is applied by a particular group of labourers, like Blum's antebellum American sailors and Rediker's early-eighteenth-century Jack Tars (Cohen, *Novel*, 2). Cohen's study is of such considerable size that useful insights into maritime literature through her consideration of craft are overshadowed by the sheer scope of the study. While she does emphasise the importance of experience at sea, its value gets lost in her unfocused application of the concept.

This thesis focuses on nineteenth-century maritime fiction that takes place (almost) entirely at sea, written by men who had worked on ships, and which treats the supernatural as intrinsic reality part of the narrative logic. The sailor-author often emphasises their own sailing experience: not only did Marryat publish his novels explicitly as 'Captain Frederick Marryat', Russell argued, for instance, that "'the impressive poetry of truth" lies in the reality of sea experience' (Nash, 88).¹⁸ This emphasis on the authors' own experience can certainly be seen as part of a marketing strategy, but from the texts themselves emerges a sense that the real seafaring world it refers to deserves writing based on experience. The authors themselves believed in the necessity of writing from direct experience; in Hester Blum's words, nineteenth-century sailor-authors 'consistently

¹⁷ Margaret Cohen, *The Novel and the Sea* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), p. 38, quoting from title page of *The Mariner's Mirrour*, 1588. Subsequent references to Cohen are to this edition and are given in parentheses as (Cohen, *Novel*, page).

¹⁸ Nash quotes William Clark Russell, *The Little Loo* 1878 (London: Sampson Low, 1883), p. 2–3.

located the value of their works in their individual experiences as working sailors' (Blum, 5).

Those who had not gone to sea only wrote about seafaring marginally. Peck points out, for instance, that although none of Charles Dickens' family members were seafarers, through their employment in the Navy Pay Office they were still dependent on seafaring (Peck, 70). Through this awareness, the maritime element appears throughout his novels, and several characters depend on maritime trade for their income. These novels are not set at sea, however. Moreover, nineteenth-century writers who experienced the sea as a place of leisure rather than work tended to write about the sea in the same distanced terms. Peck takes Anthony Trollope's imagination of the sea as 'rich man's playground' as an example of the gentleman sailor who only knew the sea from the occasional voyage and yachting (Peck, 139). The extent to which authors engaged with and experienced the maritime space, then, informed the ways in which they wrote about it.

Marryat, Russell and Hodgson cover a century in which seafaring changed dramatically. Their experience not only makes the narrative believable, part of their marketing, appeal and response seems to have legitimised any claim these narratives have on representation of thoughts, ideas and theories of life ashore or at sea. Marryat, Russell and Hodgson all argued for improved conditions on naval or merchant ships after their respective careers on board, both through their fiction and through the publications of pamphlets or maritime guidelines. This desire to change conditions on board stemmed from their first-hand experience living and working on ships. Yarn-spinning these sea legends to a larger, land-based audience, these authors share their experience not only to educate their readers on maritime matters but also, hypothesises this thesis, transpose maritime issues onto the land and land-based issues onto the sea.

Existing studies of maritime literature or history do not agree about the parameters of the relationship between ship and shore, and the extent to which this relationship should or should not be taken into account. Rediker prioritises the experience at sea, yet he cannot examine the maritime separated from the land. Peck explicitly examines the ties that bind ship and shore together, while Blum takes a comprehensive approach and looks at the experience at sea as much as at the maritime element on land. Cohen, despite her invitation to do exactly that, shows it is

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impossible to '*leave the land and to embark*' (Cohen, *Novel*, 14; emphasis in original). After inviting the reader of her study to lose sight of the land, she devotes an entire chapter to *Robinson Crusoe* where she reads Crusoe the island-dweller as the perfect mariner. An island, no matter its proximity to the sea, is still land. Cohen acknowledges that the narrative action of this novel takes place almost entirely on land but refers to it regardless, arguing the maritime craft can be found throughout canonical Anglophone literature and transposed to various resourceful, savvy characters. This contradicts her aim to bring to the fore *maritime* literature.

This struggle shows the inseparability of the land and sea in academic work on maritime novels. Philip Steinberg, in his 2001 *The Social Construction of the Ocean*, has proposed that 'the ocean – like land-space – is simultaneously an arena wherein social conflicts occur and a space shaped by these conflicts. The result is a "socially constructed" ocean which goes on to shape social relations, on land and on sea'.¹⁹ Developing this idea, he argues that the ocean should be reconstructed as an essential part of a global system of trade. This means the ocean is also a 'carefully constructed space *within* society', not *between* different societies (Steinberg, 23; emphasis in original).

Following Steinberg, this thesis takes the view that it is impossible to separate land and sea. A similar view is taken by Rediker, who argues that '[a] full understanding of life at sea requires a broader social approach'; looking at the struggle of man against nature alone does not give us sufficient insight into the experience of Jack Tar (Rediker, *Deep Blue Sea*, 5). Instead, he studies the maritime labourer 'in their totality that includes their cultural background and social relations, as well as their institutional membership and economic and political behaviour' (Rediker, *Deep Blue Sea*, 5). Rediker follows Jack Tar 'from port to port around the globe' (Rediker, *Deep Blue Sea*, 7). His interdisciplinary approach makes it impossible to ignore the land; Jack Tar is presented as link between lands and continents, and connects maritime cultures as well as land-based cultures.

Similarly, Peck's study is aimed at understanding exactly these connections between

¹⁹ Philip E. Steinberg, *The Social Construction of the Ocean* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 20. Subsequent references are to this edition and are given in parentheses.

maritime accomplishments and land-based society. Peck's study has an economic element to it. His approach is to include novels that feature maritime elements as these more clearly reflect the changes to the British economy effected through successful seafaring.²⁰ This means his study includes novelists like Jane Austen, Charles Dickens and Elizabeth Gaskell who had little direct experience with the sea and are generally not considered maritime authors. Peck, examining a wide range of novels both maritime and land-based, notices maritime elements and details that 'acknowledg[e] the maritime foundation of middle class prosperity' in Britain and America (Peck, 4). For Peck, then, the ship is not a self-contained stage for events to unfold separately from what happens in land-based societies.

Blum turns to Casarino's interpretation of Michel Foucault's influential concept of the heterotopia, a specific form of spatial representation of which the ship is the apparently perfect example; a counter-site that contains within itself other sites that are 'absolutely different from all the sites they reflect and speak about'.²¹ Casarino's elaboration on the concept which sees the 'sea novel as textual manifestation of the heterotopia amplifies the long critical history that has recognized that shipboard life is wholly isolated from landed community while still reinforcing its organization and hierarchy' (Blum, 181). What emerges from this conversation is the idea that reading the nineteenth-century sea narrative as heterotopia enables thinking about the narrative's foundation in Western civilization as a link between land and sea. This interpretation, notes Blum, suggests 'methods for determining the exchange value of sea writing itself'; in other words, the value of sea writing is found in its relationship to the land (Blum, 181). The sea narrative's metaphorical representation, or internalization, of the landed condition gives it meaning.

The narratives at stake in this thesis partake in this conversation, but at the same time put parts of it aside. Landed concerns are addressed, but not in metaphorical terms. This thesis argues that the maritime supernatural allegorises remarkably little, instead representing maritime

²⁰ John Peck, *Maritime Fiction: Sailors and the Sea in British and American Novels, 1719–1917* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), pp. 4–5. Subsequent references are to this edition and are given in parentheses.

²¹ Michel Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces', *Diacritics*, 16 (1986), 22–27; p. 24.

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anxieties, particularly around isolation and seafaring labour, in maritime terms. When the message is found on land, mainly in Marryat's fiction, it is not found in the spectral ship of the Flying Dutchman. Casarino divides the nineteenth-century sea narrative into three roughly distinct subgenres; the exotic picaresque, as mentioned, the *Bildungsroman* at sea and the modernist sea narrative (Casarino, 8–10). Only the latter, he argues, 'is structured precisely around what remains marginal and underdeveloped in the exotic picaresque and in the *Bildungsroman* of the sea, namely, the sea voyage and the world of the ship, which in this third narrative form are instead constructed as autarchic and self-enclosed narrative units and detailed as multifaceted and tension-ridden universes' (Casarino, 9). This compelling argument, which suggests the majority of nineteenth-century sea narratives are not about the sea at all and instead use the maritime space as background to the narrative plot of personal growth of its characters, is at the same time remarkably blunt. Dismissing two types of sea narratives, the exotic picaresque novel and the maritime *Bildungsroman*, as not really about the sea, Casarino overlooks these narratives' investment in conveying the maritime world precisely and accurately. The narratives discussed in this thesis, using maritime yarns with all their practical lessons, are not allegorical. They pose real questions about real concerns in the maritime world and beyond.

By looking at haunting at sea, rather than on land, this thesis aims to look at the effect of supernatural occurrences on these isolated yet communal spaces. It suggests the impact of haunting here is different from haunting in land-based places because it affects men at work, far away from relative comfort ashore. The deadly potential of life on ships creates a particular, tense atmosphere in this isolated space. Death at sea is disorienting for green hands as it disrupts their attempts to overcome anxiety at isolation from ordered, familiar spaces on land. Spectral ships capture this anxiety and make it into a tangible reality that needs to be interacted with directly in order to finally dispel it or escape from it. The singularity of the ship as a space of isolation and communal labour, then, suggests the haunting that potentially goes on here is equally singular. Isolated from land-based society despite enduring ties, the ship forces her crew members to form their own community.

This thesis examines Anglophone, mainly British, maritime literature from roughly the 1830s to the 1910s. A long literary tradition clearly distinguishes British from American maritime writing; whereas the British literary tradition has a longer history, the American novel reflects a nation in the process of coming together, resulting in literature interested in the individual experience rather than reflecting existing social structures and relations (Peck, 89). Tracing the development of the novel from *Robinson Crusoe* to the present day, Cohen looks at Anglophone and French literature, showing they all followed particular trends in the writing of sea fiction. The problem with this wide range is that the study becomes unwieldy and conclusions lose their value by lack of textual support from close-reading. The wide scope means close-reading turns into far-reading or generalising.

Blum also comments on the established history of British maritime writing, and notes it is 'generally concerned with the Royal Navy and the island nation's long history of maritime prowess' (Blum, 8). The sense of self-mythologisation in British maritime writing is passed over by Blum, but is of central concern to this thesis because of the implications of the supernatural on British confidence in this maritime prowess. The long-stretching literary tradition in British maritime literature means authors took the same core legend as their subject matter and adapt it to the taste and sensibilities of the time. This means an established practice of similar spectral ship stories exists in British literature. In American literature, on the other hand, a new literary tradition had to be invented. A new American novel on old-world, European legends simply would not do. The lack of Dutchman adaptations in American literature of the period are evidence of this. There is a strong hint of nationalism here; there appears to be something particularly British about this haunting, which is brought into relief by the lack of American versions. The kind of maritime supernatural narratives that are of interest to this thesis, then, are primarily found in the long British literary tradition.

Literature on the experience of being haunted at sea has not been studied in-depth. The intersection of maritime fiction and the haunted narrative is a particular and simultaneously wide-ranging genre. While sailor superstitions have been studied as part of studies of the sailor

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experience, incarnations of these superstitions in fiction have not been examined. Maritime superstition has been touched upon lightly as a phenomenon that can easily be understood by land-based readers, writes Charles Napier Robinson in 1911, as how ‘the doleful wailing and weird shrieks that arise from the birds on an unfrequented part of the coast, or a lonely islet on the ocean’ can metamorphose into ‘the amazing yarns which, with extreme circumstantiality, are set forth in the old books of travel, and have been perpetuated by many generations of tars’.²² Robinson considers the maritime superstition part of the reason why sailors are often depicted romantically, in other words, not depicted as they really are ‘[t]inged with an abiding respect for the unseen Powers, whether of benevolent or diabolic origin, [sailors’] religious feelings and sentiments were deeply ingrained by a superstitious reverence for the more material representation of the supernatural’ (Robinson, 153–54). The fact that these supernatural phenomena can easily be explained by applying reason should not devalue the supernatural yarns’ original intentions on board ship, nor what their content can tell us about the men who tell them. Yet Robinson’s easy dismissal of them as fanciful but explicable snippets of stories does exactly that. This thesis demonstrates the relationship between efforts of explanation and supernatural phenomena at sea. Attempts to comprehend these supernatural goings on are made through variations of yarn-spinning. Numerous characters engage in storytelling with the purpose of understanding the menacing, unnatural world around them. They never come to an irrefutable conclusion, because the supernatural phenomena ultimately evade reason.

This thesis is aimed at understanding the effect of spinning supernatural yarns on fictitious labouring seafarers. I want to consider the interruption of labour on ships by the supernatural. Put another way, in order to enrich the field of study that engages with literature written by working seafarers, this thesis considers the literary incarnations of the experience of being haunted at sea, the effect of this haunting on a working community and how the experience of seafaring labour changes through the supernatural. The period in which these narratives are written shows great

²² Charles Napier Robinson, *The British Tar in Fact and Fiction: The Poetry, Pathos, and Humour of the Sailor’s Life* (London and New York: Harper and Brothers, 1911), p. 153.

technological development and societal change – at sea as well as on land. Sailing ships were still in use but as the century goes by, they are gradually replaced by steamships. The period 1830 to 1910 shows this development. The scope of this thesis is checked through a focus on particular themes that resonated with the discussed authors themselves – duty and religion for Marryat, nostalgia and otherness for Russell, and weirdness and modernity for Hodgson – in order to find a place for these supernatural tales of the sea in existing discourses of maritime literature.

1.3 Chapter overview

Chapter one sets up a discussion of the ship as a space that is home and yet not quite home. It shows the natural uncanniness of maritime culture, shipboard life and labour in nineteenth-century non-fiction as well as discuss the uncanny itself as a prevalent literary element. Using Richard Henry Dana's 1840 *Two Years Before the Mast*, a non-fictional account of nineteenth-century mercantile seafaring, this chapter aims at an understanding of maritime culture without the disturbance of ghosts. Once the maritime supernatural occurs, it will be all the more noticeable and disturbing. Three themes will be discussed, each with its own elements that warrant close examination; the other as shipmate, hierarchy and authority, and folklore and religion. This leads to a discussion of the uncanny, and how the familiar-turned-unfamiliar, used particularly in relation to the ghostly, relates to the naturally uncanny maritime space.

Chapter two is aimed at creating a deeper understanding of the maritime supernatural genre. It considers three elements that constitute haunting in landed literature and places them in a maritime context. It begins by outlining the figure of the ghost itself, from ephemeral spirit whose identity is fluctuating to the tangible cursed undead of the seas. It then moves to a discussion of the haunted space, arguing that a simple transfer from haunted house to haunted ship is not possible due to the unique reality of the ship. It is an inhabited space, not a domestic space, and this difference is explored in relation to being haunted. It shows how fictional yarn-spinning creates different expectations and atmospheres compared to non-fictional yarn-spinning. I clarify the

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difference between the haunted ship and the ship that haunts. This leads into the suggestion that the maritime environment, which is considered as a haunted-haunting space in itself, is an active participant in haunting, in uncanny unison with the Dutchman's curse.

The third chapter analyses Frederick Marryat's *The Phantom Ship*, published in serialised form between 1837 and 1839. The chapter follows the novel's own division between a conventional maritime supernatural narrative and a more challenging landed narrative where duty and religion play important roles. Duty is one of the novel's many expressions of duality and Marryat's curious use of this maritime concept in the supernatural context of *The Phantom Ship* suggests a link between the maritime and the supernatural narratives. The chapter then moves to a discussion of Orientalism in the novel, showing how Marryat's original interpretation of an unusual Oriental woman in religious discussion challenges the study of Orientalism.

Chapter four covers the period 1850 to 1880 and contemplates the lack of maritime supernatural narratives which coincided with the building and opening of the Suez Canal from 1859 to 1869. It suggests that this exciting time of technological development caused old-world ghosts to be temporarily forgotten, only to return in subsequent years. It argues the origins of late-nineteenth-century nostalgia for the age of sail can be found in these decades.

The fifth chapter analyses *The Frozen Pirate* and *The Death Ship* by William Clark Russell. Whereas *The Frozen Pirate* moves the maritime supernatural into the realm of science fiction, and is not based on an existing maritime legend, *The Death Ship* is a more traditional invocation of the maritime supernatural, a retelling of the Dutchman legend. It contrasts sharply with Marryat's earlier incarnation of the same legend. Russell's novel is steeped in nostalgia, and this chapter further examines this frequently-used but little investigated phrase "nostalgia for the age of sail" often attributed to the author. It looks at anxieties surrounding the future of seafaring labour, national identity and conflicting temporalities.

Chapter six examines on William Hope Hodgson's weird novel *The Ghost Pirates* as well as a selection of his short stories. His ghost stories are set at sea written by an experienced sailor, but seemingly without foundation in existing maritime lore. While Hodgson's short stories challenge

romanticised notions of shipboard communities and maritime culture, *The Ghost Pirates* employs the theme of the haunted-haunting ship in order to express a new, modern way of haunting at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Not everyone is familiar with the legend of the Flying Dutchman, and the basic version reproduced in *The Oxford Companion to Ships and the Sea* will serve as an unembellished base line to (re)acquaint readers with the yarn.

Flying Dutchman, The, perhaps the most famous of all legends of the sea. There are several variations of it. The most usual story is that of a Dutch skipper, Captain Vanderdecken, who on a voyage home from Batavia and faced with a howling gale, swore by *Donner* and *Blitzen* that he would beat into Table Bay in spite of God's wrath. His ship foundered as he had this oath on his lips, and he was condemned to go on sailing until eternity in his attempt to reach Table Bay. The spectre of his ship is supposed to haunt the waters round the Cape of Good Hope and a strong superstition among sailors is that anyone who sets eyes upon her will die by shipwreck.²³

²³ Peter Kemp, *The Oxford Companion to Ships and the Sea* (London: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. 319. Subsequent references are to this edition and are given in parentheses.

Chapter 1: Maritime culture and the uncanny.

1.1 Maritime culture

The ship and its culture are indispensable to an understanding of the maritime supernatural. It is not only the locus for haunting at sea, but the numerous interactions that take place on board all contribute to this complex variety of the supernatural. Shipboard interactions, between sailor and sailor, captain and sailor, crew and ship, crew and nature, and ship and nature, both inform and facilitate the maritime supernatural. Through a reading of a non-fictional account of life at sea, this chapter brings the natural strangeness of the maritime world into view. Richard Henry Dana's 1840 *Two Years Before the Mast*, his non-fictional account of two years sailing on two merchant vessels in the 1820s is analysed to consider nineteenth-century maritime culture and contextualise this thesis' subject in the real space of the sailing ship.

There are potential problems with using Dana's *Two Years* to contextualise this thesis in the real experience of seafaring. First, Dana was American, and his experience was in the American mercantile service rather than in the British mercantile or naval service which this thesis focuses on. The individualist writing style of the American sea-writing tradition is a stark contrast with the British tendency to follow established convention 'concerned with the Royal navy and the island's long history of maritime prowess' (Blum, 8). Dana's idiosyncratic American style is useful here; Dana's focus on how the events make him feel evoke clearly his own, direct experience with seafaring. It transcends nationality. A similar focus on the idiosyncratic experience of the supernatural at sea is at stake in later chapters of this thesis; how the appearance of a supernatural entity affects the experience of particular characters changes how the haunting is interpreted. Dana's text has become a canonical piece of literature which was instantaneously successful in its

own time and a British non-fictional sea narrative of equivalent impact simply does not exist.¹

Second, the experience on American ships was not much different from sailing under the British flag in the nineteenth century. The mix of nationalities that made up nineteenth-century crews shows skills obtained on ships of one nationality were transferable to be used on ships of other nationalities (Rediker, *Deep Blue Sea*, 79–84). Moreover, Dana's sailing was done in the mercantile service; while experience in fishing or the whaling industry would have been very different indeed, working in the merchant service was a comparable experience in most of the Western world (Rediker, *Deep Blue Sea*, 83).

Third, Dana, born in an affluent family and who became a lawyer in later years, never loses sight of his position in society on land. He is not truly a lower-class labourer and his experience is always influenced by his sense of difference from those who he calls a thoroughbred sailor. However, not only is this sense of otherness important to the experience of both seafaring and haunting, his narrative is nevertheless a realistic and reliable account of shipboard life and labour. It is to be kept in mind that Dana intended to write a true account of his seafaring experience (Lucid, 395–96; Blum, 96). Although the Dana presented on the pages of *Two Years* is a fictionalised and edited version of the man Dana, his narrative is realistic and reliable for the fact that he did go to sea for two years and did learn the ropes and nuances of seafaring. Ultimately, his resistance to complete initialisation into the community of common, low-ranked sailors known as the fore-castle fraternity shows a duality fundamental to the seafaring experience described in this thesis.

The otherness embodied by Dana presents a substantial link between the ship and the land in *Two Years* and illustrates the duality that is present in much writing about the sea. As a partial outsider, Dana is able to describe the shipboard life from a distance and note its otherness without showing the ship as completely detached from the land. This contrasts with Margaret Creighton's suggestion that the shipboard life is 'a life easily observed because so contained'.² A ship, though

¹ Robert F. Lucid, "'Two Years Before the Mast' as Propaganda", *American Quarterly*, 12 (1960), 392–403; p. 392.

² Margaret S. Creighton, 'Fraternity in the American Fore-castle, 1830-1870', *The New England Quarterly*, 63 (1990), 531–57; p. 533.

admittedly self-reliant to an extent, frequently went into port for fresh supplies, letters were delivered regularly on board, sailors came and went during the voyages – legally or no – and Dana’s own concern with his land-based career after the voyage illustrates the shipboard life was not confined to the sea but also actively interacted with the land.

The early-nineteenth century grappled with an ‘anxiety about the issue of authenticity’.³ In maritime fiction this anxiety is expressed through ‘the different structural relations between the positions of author and sailor’ (Berger, 34). These “outsiders”, men who, by virtue of their “talent and information,” saw themselves as distinct from most other sailors’ (Creighton, 533). These men, who ‘labor[ed] for a time in the role of a so-called common sailor’, were glad to leave the shipboard life as soon as they tired of it (Berger, ‘Antebellum Fantasies’, 38). Dana is very conscious of actively distancing himself from the seafaring profession before it consumes him and he becomes a real sailor. Dana’s detached vision is part of the reason why *Two Years* is considered to be authentic enough to be seen as ‘a social documentary of devastating power’ that brought awareness about the harsh realities of shipboard labour to the greater public (Lucid, 392). Robert Lucid points out, however, that it was not Dana’s intention to bring about social change. However, critics’ attention to this aspect of seafaring life was crucial to the novel’s reception by readers then and now (Lucid, 393).

The ship, with its culture of inclusion and exclusion, and threat of violence, is far from a domestic space – something which is crucial to understand when exploring the maritime supernatural. Mary Louise Pratt argues persuasively that domesticity and commercial enterprise ‘could not be more different because they are so much defined in terms of each other; they are complementary’.⁴ The ship is not a domestic place because it is a place of hard labour, occasional violence and enterprise, which parallels Pratt’s distinction between the domestic and the commercial. It is a vessel of imperial expansion and a machine of commercial interests; while it is

³ Jason Berger, ‘Antebellum Fantasies of the Common Sailor; or, Enjoying the Knowing Jack Tar’, *Criticism*, 51 (2009), 29–61; p. 30.

⁴ Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), p. 78.

an inhabited space, the ship is not quite a domestic space. The ship is not a home, a 'place of certainty and of stability'.⁵ To be at home, Kimberley Dovey points out, 'is to know where you are, it means to inhabit a secure center and to be oriented in space' (Dovey, 3). In ships at sea, security and orientation are difficult to find. Diagrams of nineteenth-century ships show vividly the difference in size between cabins, the forecastle deck and the cargo holds. Sailors' berths, for example, were small and crowded compared to the hold space intended for the goods the ship was meant to carry.⁶ Unlike the house, the ship's primary purpose is trade, not domesticity and homeliness.

This notion of the ship as a not-quite domestic space is important. It complicates the conventional ideas of haunting and the uncanny which often presents an intrusion of the repressed familiar-turned-unfamiliar on domestic spaces.⁷ The maritime supernatural, taking place in an inhabited space that is not particularly domestic, does not fit this paradigm. The literary effect of supernatural disruption on the not-quite domestic space of the ship will be discussed more fully in following chapters. Here, I will explore the ship as not-quite domestic space, the seafaring culture and interactions on board ships, arguing that the ship and seafaring culture are naturally uncanny without the intrusion of the supernatural. Set up as a space that is not homely, domestic and comfortable, I will consider how the setting of the ship changes the nature of haunting.

From the moment he steps on board, Dana focuses on the differences between himself and the rest of the crew. Throughout the narrative, this sense of otherness develops and presents itself in two ways; whereas initially Dana's lack of experience makes him feel like an outcast, halfway

⁵ Kimberley Dovey, 'Home and Homelessness: Introduction' in *Home Environments* eds. Irwin Altman and Carol M. Werner (New York: Plenum Press, 1985), 1–22; p. 3.

⁶ Robert Foulke, 'Life in the Dying World of Sail, 1870–1910', *Journal of British Studies*, 3 (1963), 105–36; p. 110–13. Subsequent references are to this edition and are given in parentheses as (Foulke, 'Life', page). See also Basil Greenhill, *Travelling by Sea in the Nineteenth Century: Interior Design in Victorian Passenger ships* (New York: Hastings House Publishers, 1972), pp. 7–10.

Diagrams can be found in e.g. Howard I. Chapelle, *The History of American Sailing Ships* (New York: Bonanza Books, 1935), pp. 92–93 and David R. MacGregor, *The Tea Clippers: An Account of the China Tea Trade and some of the British Sailing Ships engaged in it from 1849 to 1869* (London: Conway Maritime Press, 1972), pp. 118–9. Subsequent references to MacGregor are to this edition and are given in parentheses.

⁷ Robert Mighall, *A Geography of Victorian Gothic Fiction: Mapping History's Nightmares* (Oxford: University of Oxford Press, 1999), p. 10.

through the narrative (and voyage) his strong feelings about class differences encourage his self-identification as other. Dana initially feels alienated from the other crew members because of his unfamiliarity with the language and the work itself: 'Unintelligible orders were so rapidly given, and so immediately executed; there was such a hurrying about, and such an intermingling of *strange cries and strange actions*, that I was completely bewildered'.⁸ Once he is accepted into the fore-castle fraternity, he fears complete assimilation will mean he will not be able to unlearn his sailor ways, and he begins reasserting his own otherness as a means of preserving his land-based position.

Sailor's jargon, notoriously incomprehensible to outsiders, is portrayed as a foreign, alien language which goes completely over the inexperienced Dana's head (Rediker, *Deep Blue Sea*, 11; 163). As a result, Dana feels mystified by the labour that goes on around him. Crucially, it is going on *around* him; he does not seem to participate in the hustle and bustle of loading cargo and getting the ship ready for departure. Even when he is made to trim the yards, he observes his fellow crewmembers instead of focusing on the task at hand. Dana is a spectator who is not yet a useful member of the crew, and because of this inability to participate, he is alienated. He is not yet part of those who make up the in-crowd that possesses the know-how and still sees them as the other. This sense of alienation is also strongly connected with the location of Dana's bunk, and the inevitable turning point is when Dana moves from steerage to fore-castle. He says that

We now began to feel like sailors, which we never did when we were in the steerage. While there, however useful and active you may be, you are but a mongrel. You are immediately under the eye of the officers, cannot dance, sing, play, smoke, make a noise, or *growl*, or take any other sailor's pleasure; and you live with the steward, who is usually a go-between and the crew never feel as though you were *one of them*. But if you live in the fore-castle you hear sailors' talk, learn their ways, their peculiarities of feeling as well as speaking and acting; and, moreover, pick up a great deal of curious and useful information in seamanship, ships' customs, foreign countries etc., from their long yarns and equally long disputes (Dana, 47).

⁸ Richard Henry Dana, *Two Years Before the Mast* 1840 (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, [n.d.]), p. 8; emphasis added.

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It is here, in the forecandle, where Dana comes to learn the sailor's ways. The supervision in steerage makes him feel like an animal, a 'mongrel' that cannot even 'make a noise, or *growl*'. He is also aware of how he is perceived as other by the other crew members. By moving to the forecandle Dana ensures his own assimilation into the forecandle fraternity; he begins to speak and act like a sailor, as well as finally obtain the necessary technical knowledge. This change of location will not only give him a sense of social security and inclusion, but will help him develop his seafaring skills.

As Dana is finally becoming part of the crew, the potential length of the voyage becomes a source of anxiety as it is not his intention to become a sailor for the rest of his life. When the voyage is threatened by delay, Dana thinks it 'was bad enough for *them* [the rest of the crew]; but still *worse* was it for me, who did not mean to be a sailor for life, having intended only to be gone eighteen months or two years. Three or four years *would make me a sailor in every respect, mind and habits as well as body*, and would put all my companions so far ahead of me that college and a *profession* would be in vain to think of' (Dana, 76; emphasis added). Despite his earlier wish to become part of this crew, Dana now feels he is at risk of soon reaching the point of no return and becoming a true, thoroughbred sailor. He acknowledges that physically becoming a sailor is beneficial but wants to prevent the mental deterioration that he is sure will follow, as that will likely result in his being unable to secure a respectable profession on land. The prospect of a two-year voyage 'would be pretty long, but would not be fatal. It would not necessarily be decisive of my future life' (Dana, 133). As Jason Berger sees it, the 'fear of not only losing ground within mainland professional society, but of fully and permanently becoming a sailor, testifies to his *not presently* inhabiting such a position' (Berger, 'Antebellum Fantasies', 41–42; emphasis added). I would argue Dana does not ever fully inhabit the position of sailor, not because he has failed in his attempts but because he is fundamentally unwilling to become a thoroughbred seaman. It is his unwillingness that causes his inability to communicate with and relate to the other sailors.

Dana's resistance to complete immersion contradicts Creighton's argument that the 'forecandle was a great leveller' and that sailors who saw themselves as better than the common

Jack Tars were ‘strongly urged to abandon their pretensions and embrace, if only temporarily, the “common” men around them’ (Creighton, 540). She acknowledges that not all Other sailors took this step to be included in the forecastle fraternity, and Dana clearly turns out to be one of these men who still stand out after being included in it. The attention to class differences is emphasised by Dana’s relief in finding a new English shipmate ‘had a good education’, which he says is more important to him than technical savvy and nautical know-how (Dana, 157). Dana is relieved to find he is not alone in his otherness; he cannot be part of the forecastle fraternity but he can find those who are most like him.

The forecastle fraternity can be read as an imagined community, particularly in the way Darryl Jones engages with the concept. Jones, in his study of the horror genre and its development, defines imagined communities as ‘potentially disparate political, cultural and ethnic groupings willed into unity by acts of imagination, articulated through narrative, myth and symbol’.⁹ When the forecastle fraternity is thought about in these terms, remarkable similarities come to the fore. Shipboard crews attract sailors of different political, national and cultural backgrounds, and their propensity for yarn-spinning and myth-making often creates a sense of community for the length of the voyage. The acts of imagination are undertaken by the crew members themselves through yarn-spinning. Dana’s non-fictional narrative shows that in the forecastle fraternity pervades a sense of ‘a Self-Other relationship’ (Jones, *Horror*, 8). This suggests the disintegration of the imagined community is easier than it appears due to its inherent lack of homogeneity.

The crews of individual ships imagine themselves as close-knit communities that simultaneously display a strong and changeable sense of self and other. This is largely in line with Benedict Anderson’s definition of the imagined community, which ascribes the imagining to members of the community itself, seeing itself as ‘inherently limited and sovereign’.¹⁰ The term “sailor” emphatically does not apply to everyone. Being a sailor is often seen as synonymous with

⁹ Darryl Jones, *Horror: A Thematic History in Film and Fiction* (London: Arnold, 2002), p. 8. Subsequent references are to this edition and are given in parentheses as (Jones, *Horror*, page).

¹⁰ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* 1983 (London and New York: Verso, 2006), p. 6.

liberation and taking charge of one's own destiny, although Dana's experience shows us this is not always the case.¹¹ The term "imagined community" can also be applied to the seafaring profession as a whole, imagined as a strongly-knit community that is seen as uniform from the outside, encompassing differences, shared cultural institutions and sensibilities of hierarchies. The outsiders, who, 'regardless of actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, [imagine the community] as a deep, horizontal comradeship' (Anderson, 7). Dana argues against this landlubber view of the seafaring community, who have not shared in the shipboard experience. Even though he is reluctant to see himself as a thoroughbred sailor, he still distances himself from the poor landsmen who have never experienced shipboard life and labour. Having some experience is evidently better than having none at all. It shows the inherent multiplicity of the sailor life; belonging to multiple places at once, with obligations to both people ashore and at sea.

The self-other relationship Jones sees as constructive to the development of eighteenth-century land-based horror narratives is of similar importance in the nineteenth-century maritime supernatural (Jones, *Horror*, 8). As will be discussed, national identity plays a similar role at sea as it does on land, where the rival nation embodies 'all that is venal, reprehensible, archaic, or otherwise rejected' (Jones, *Horror*, 8). A similar role, but not the same: the liminality of life at sea causes the stark lines of nationality to gradually blur in maritime supernatural fiction. A sense of difference haunts the imagined community of the forecastle fraternity in maritime supernatural fiction and is often embodied by the cursed undead, liminal figures that are neither self nor other, but uncomfortably in-between.

¹¹ See also Hester Blum, *The View from the Masthead* (2008): 'The sea is an irregular environment for labor, and the nineteenth-century ship that took the ocean as a work space had no analogue in the factory, the shop, or the farm. Maritime work was precarious. As dangerous as factory work could be in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, maritime work was exceptionally deadly, as accidents, storms, disease, and drowning claimed many sailors. Most sailors were wage laborers, but they could not readily walk off the job site or be replaced. Although their work was divided into shifts, called watches, sailors were subject to the erratic and inexorable demands of the weather. The ship's captain was an absolute boss, against whom there was little recourse; action against a tyrannical captain could be judged mutinous and punishable by death. Well into the middle of the nineteenth century, until a successful reform effort driven by sailors themselves, captains themselves had the authority to administer corporal punishment in the form of flogging' (Blum, *Masthead*, 110–11).

Dana the Other, the alien sailor unable to really make contact with those around him, is simultaneously haunted by these sailors whom *he* sees as Other. Additionally, he is haunted by the threatening possibility of becoming a full-time sailor as well as by his land-based life and prospective career. Dana's haunting is metaphorical: there are no supernatural beings that intrude on his communal space but his relationship to the other crew members is reminiscent of more visceral, supernatural ways of haunting. Dana's insistence on his status as other denotes displacement. He labours in an unfamiliar environment and, especially as a green hand, finds himself incapable of communicating with the other crew members. It reinforces the sense of the not-quite domesticity of the ship's forecandle.

On a different scale, Dana's displacement in the forecandle allows him to see the sailor and write about himself *as* the sailor, though without acknowledging his own anxiety for the obvious gap between himself and the others. Dana needs to invade the imagined community of the forecandle fraternity where he, as outsider, never truly belongs. This duality echoes through the maritime supernatural. This division between the self and other presents a gap that appears unbridgeable; we can 'never fully conceive of the other's knowledge because it is, in a way, trapped by [our] own gaze' (Berger, 'Antebellum Fantasies', 44). This self-other split is reworked as haunting in the maritime supernatural. The haunting in turn gives substance to the self-other division. Outsiders to the curse cannot fathom what it is like to be cursed because they are fundamentally *not* cursed. Characters in Marryat's, Russell's and Hodgson's fiction attempt to understand the supernatural, rationalise its elements and predict its course, but definite answers are impossible. In turn, those affected by the curse, whether they are aware of it or not, are no longer able to relate to those who are not cursed because they occupy another temporal and physical space than the living, which is also different from when they were alive. Yet both parties recognise the gap and cannot help but see the other as Other.

A significant element of shipboard life and labour is the emphasis on a hierarchy of power and expression of authority. This hierarchy with the captain, mates and officers at the top and common sailors at the bottom is contained in the expression of shipboard authority, where the

captain commands and sailors obey. Aside from this formal, hierarchical system of authority, an alternative system based on experience is in place. In this system of experiential authority, many 'older and experienced seamen, *whatever their formal position*, minimized the differential in knowledge that separated the top of the ship's labour hierarchy from its bottom' (Rediker, *Deep Blue Sea*, 87–88; emphasis added). This experiential, informal authority, opposed to formal, hierarchical authority, Rediker suggests, attempts to bridge a gap between the forecastle and the officers. This attempt is one-sided, however; experiential authority is often only demonstrated by crewmembers and not by the mates and the captain, for whom formal authority is usually sufficient.

The apparent importance of experiential authority suggests a division within the shipboard labourer as subject and master. It further shows the disjointed nature of the shipboard experience, the divergent sets of rules, written and unwritten, one needs to understand and adhere to in order to survive. In *Two Years*, however, the focus is largely on formal authority, with experience featured minimally throughout. The verifiable truthfulness of Dana's experiences promotes his narrative's authenticity, and this relies on acknowledgement of formal authority. Fictional narratives of seafaring, on the other hand, emphasise experience over formal authority, reinforcing claims made in yarns which makes them more believable and creates a context in which the supernatural is more likely to appear.

Studies aimed at understanding hierarchical relations at sea tend to draw parallels between ship and shore, often concluding that the ship is a liminal space. In this in-between space, the landed structures of power are abandoned and replaced by a different temporal or spatial structure.¹² This anti-structural space mediates between two other spaces, which are usually structural. After a spell in this in-between space – spell used deliberately here; there is something

¹² Jesse Oak Taylor-Ide, 'Ritual and the Liminality of Sherlock Holmes in *The Sign of Four* and *The Hound of the Baskervilles*', *English Literature in Transition, 1800–1920*, 48 (2005), 55–70; p. 56. See also Philip Steinberg, 'Of other seas: metaphors and materialities in maritime regions' in *Atlantic Studies*, (2013), Gesa Mackenthun, 'Chartless Voyages and Protean Geographies: Nineteenth-Century American Fictions of the Black Atlantic' in *Sea Changes: Historicizing the Ocean*, (2004); Robert Foulke, *The Sea Voyage Narrative* (1997).

unnatural and otherworldly about this place of passage – we arrive in a new, structured societal space. In this paradigm, the seafaring journey is presented as a lawless, unstructured, yet somehow formative event.

It is tempting to see the ship as one of these anti-structural places; after all, it operates quite literally away from and between land-based societies with their rules and social structures, and is the embodiment of a passage from one space to another. On the other hand, the ship is not an anti-structural space where lawlessness and chaos reign; it is a space with a strict social structure in which hierarchical and authorial relations define personal relations. The ship's social structure is distinct from land-based societal structures because the ship is usually an all-male, enclosed space of labour. Ships are not, as Gesa Mackenthun argues, 'miniature geographies – social spaces in which the hierarchies of landed societies are acted out, often in extreme ways, and are therefore in constant danger of being subverted'.¹³ If land-based relations of power are seen as creating structured spaces, and ships have their own power relations, it is implied the ship has its own societal structure and is not a liminal space characterised by anti-structure and invisibility. Focusing on the forecastle fraternity, the tightly-knit community of labouring crewmembers, brings together the apparently contradictory interpretations of the ship as both lawless and rule-governed.

Mackenthun suggests that shipboard authority is constantly in danger of being subverted due to the confined nature of shipboard life. While the restrictions of life on board could and did lead to tensions, evidenced by Dana on numerous occasions, authorial and hierarchical relations are rarely completely upturned. Actual mutiny was rare in real life; masters would more often find a way of appeasing the situation before it could escalate.¹⁴ Dana's attitude to mutiny and punishment, for example, reflects the idea that as long as all crew members behave and do as they are told by the captain, there ought not to be any problem. Anyone who still insists on making

¹³ Gesa Mackenthun, 'Chartless Voyages and Protean Geographies: Nineteenth-Century American Fictions of the Black Atlantic' in *Sea Changes: Historicizing the Ocean*. Ed. Bernhard Klein and Gesa Mackenthun (New York and London: Routledge, 2004), 131–48, p. 145.

¹⁴ See Markus Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea* (1987) and Margaret Creighton, 'Fraternity in the American Forecastle, 1830–1870' in *The New England Quarterly* (1990).

trouble will receive a deserved punishment. Shipboard relations are not constantly strained; in an environment dependant on collaboration, continuous feelings of mutiny are impossible to maintain. That is not to say the threat is not real, or was never used as a literary device; rather, the notion of the forecastle fraternity under constant strain from within is not quite nuanced enough to reflect the reality of seafaring. Neither is the notion that the community of the forecastle crew created an unequivocal sense of fraternity that included everyone without exception. The reality of seafaring is found between these two extremes, balanced between the formal authority of captains and officers, and the experiential authority of veteran sailors.

It does not take long for Dana to realise that the ‘captain, in the first place, is lord paramount. He stands no watch, comes and goes when he pleases, and is accountable to no one, and must be obeyed in everything. He has the power to turn his officers off duty, and even to make them do duty as sailors in the forecastle’ (Dana, 14). This ‘rigid taskmaster’ has the power to singlehandedly change predetermined shipboard positions, having the possibility of demoting and promoting without consultation (Creighton, 532). Interestingly, the quotation above is the extent to which Dana describes the captain’s role – he is very much defined as a figure of authority with a disproportionate amount of power. Dana never alludes to the various duties the captain has to perform, which include navigation, operating the compasses and managing the crew efficiently (Rediker, *Deep Blue Sea*, 84).¹⁵ Dana sees only the authoritarian side of his captain, which is magnified by the captain’s irate reproach directed towards one of the crew, second mate Foster; ‘[y]ou’re no more than a *thing* aboard a vessel’ (Dana, 22). Despite Dana’s earlier description of Foster as ‘an idle, careless fellow, and not much of a sailor’, the captain’s use of the word “thing” dehumanises Foster (Dana, 22). Within half a page, Foster goes from being perceived as idle and careless to being called ‘the poor fellow’ (Dana, 22). Foster is an officer but in Dana’s sympathetic description appears to admit him into the forecastle fraternity in order to highlight and widen the

¹⁵ See Rodrigo Oliveira Torres, ‘Handling the ship: rights and duties of masters, mates, seamen and owners of ships in nineteenth-century merchant marine’, *The Journal of International Maritime History*, (2014), pp. 589–93.

distance between the captain and the rest of the crew.

Dana's temporary admission of Foster into the crew achieves an equally temporary intimacy between this officer and the forecastle fraternity. However, this inclusion is especially striking considering Dana's later relief when his request to move from steerage to forecastle is granted and he escapes from the watchful eye of the officers. Cited in full above, it will be helpful to repeat part of the passage here. In steerage, Dana finds one is 'immediately under the eye of the officers, cannot dance, sing, play, smoke, make a noise, or *growl*, or take any other sailor's pleasure' (Dana, 47). It is impossible to express oneself under the watchful eyes of the officers; neither expressions of pleasure or dissatisfaction are felt to be appropriate here. The formal authority is stifling, preventing Dana from becoming part of the crew and gaining the necessary knowledge to become a sailor and assimilated in the forecastle fraternity. In other words, it prevents the individual's development from landlubber to sailor. Yet here, Foster, singled out by the captain, is temporarily admitted to the same fraternity to which his formal rank denies him access.

Formal authority is challenged only sporadically throughout *Two Years*. In a chapter forebodingly called 'Bad Prospects', on her way back around Cape Horn the ship is loaded deeply and heavily, and 'she wanted the buoyancy which should have carried her over the seas, and she dropped heavily into them' (Dana, 229). Experienced seamen blame the captain 'for loading his ship so deep, when he knew what he must expect' of the weather at Cape Horn, whereas others assert that as long as they run before the wind, they 'should not mind the seas so much' (Dana, 231). These comments and criticisms are not uttered in front of the captain; they are shared among the forecastle fraternity but do not leave it. Later, the crew go even further and quietly suspect the captain of being 'frightened, completely cowed by the dangers and difficulties that surrounded us' and of having made 'a free use of brandy and opium, and was unfit for his duty' (Dana, 244). These are serious accusations but it does not appear the crew really believe the captain is a coward and a drunk.

Instead, the sailors are using their seafaring experience as an authoritative argument against the captain's conduct. Brian Rouleau argues that the shipboard environment, with its emphasis on

determination and hierarchical authority, did not leave space for '[f]ear, conflict, and dissatisfaction'.¹⁶ Rouleau argues how folklore, seafaring experience accumulated over years of sailing expressed through yarns, 'provided an excellent conduit for uttering and neutralizing misgivings' (Rouleau, 48). By expressing their dissatisfaction with the captain's decisions through their shared experiential authority, the crew are able to continue labouring to keep the ship afloat instead of organising a work stoppage or even mutiny. Formal authority has the upper hand in *Two Years*; despite widespread misgivings, the top-gallant-sails are not furled in the storm as 'the "old man" [the captain] did not mean to be frightened in broad daylight and was determined to carry sail to the last minute' (Dana, 233). It is not until he gives the command that the sails are furled. Despite the men's years of experience perhaps telling them otherwise, they all wait for their captain's command before action is taken.

As Dana and his shipmates find, formal authority that is rooted in a predetermined system is difficult to challenge. One of the more dramatic confrontations occurs near the end of the narrative, when the first mate feels the captain intrudes upon his authority when the latter 'c[omes] forward, and also beg[ins] to give orders. This ma[kes] confusion' as the captain's orders interfere with the mate's orders (Dana, 264). The mate reacts by going aft – usually the captain's territory, resulting in role reversal – and says,

"If you come forward, sir, I'll go aft. One is enough on the forecastle."

This produced a reply and another fierce answer; and the word flew, fists were doubled up, and things looked threatening.

"I'm master of this ship."

"Yes, sir, and I'm mate of her, and know my place. My place is forward and yours is aft!"

"My place is where I choose! I command the *whole* ship, and you are mate only so long as I choose!"

"Say the word, Captain T-, and I'm done! I can do a man's work abroad! I didn't come through the cabin windows! If I'm not mate I can be man."

This was all fun for us, who stood by, winking at each other, and enjoying the contest between the higher powers (Dana, 264; *emphasis in original, emphasis added*).

¹⁶ Brian J. Rouleau, 'Dead Men Do Tell Tales: Folklore, Fraternity, and the Forecastle', *Early American Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 5 (2007), 30–62; p. 48.

Dana and his shipmates do not take sides in this altercation but instead enjoy the spectacle from the sidelines. The mate shows he knows his place and implies the captain does not. The captain's authority however, sees him take on any role he pleases – after all, as Dana pointed out in the very beginning of his narrative, the captain is 'lord paramount' and can do what he wants. The mate's attempt at role reversal is ineffective, however; the mate and the captain go aft to discuss the issue in private and the mate resumes his duties. Even though Dana admits the captain had crossed a line 'without reason' (Dana, 264). The mate's anger is justifiable, but Dana concludes the episode by saying 'he was wrong, and the captain right' (Dana, 265).

Throughout the narrative, Dana adopts a similar stance towards punishment and the expression of formal authority. When two shipmates are prepared for being flogged, Dana feels 'sick and almost faint, angry and excited' (Dana, 83). He also admits that there is nothing to be done about this violence: 'Bad as it was it must be borne. It is what sailor ships are for' (Dana, 84). The ship, Dana suggests, becomes a tool that imposes discipline on wayward sailors. The formal authority of the captain and other officers is characteristic of the nineteenth-century sea voyage and is a recurring theme in maritime fiction as well as non-fiction. Experiential authority challenges the formal hierarchy of the ship by suggesting that experience is as valuable as rank. The formal authority of officers on board ship is less robust than it might seem, and the unexpected duality in the expression of power is initially strange. Maritime supernatural narratives take this instability further, as experience in the face of the supernatural is more valuable than formal authority. Ghosts provide a particular type of confrontation different from the expected challenges arising from confined spaces and disjunction between authority and experience. By enhancing the contrast between formal and experiential authority, maritime supernatural narratives emphasise the communality of seafaring, and its disruption becomes more disturbing.

Despite the supposed ubiquity of experiential authority in seafaring life, it does not feature heavily in Dana's non-fictional seafaring narrative. The informal authority expressed by older seamen makes use of their long seafaring experience, often providing 'the measure and understanding of events and activities. The intensity of storms, for example, was always gauged

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against the memory of the old salts' (Rediker, *Deep Blue Sea*, 157). Rouleau points out that high mortality rates and a tendency to leave the seafaring profession after a handful of voyages meant 'a quasi-political and moral authority inherently devolved upon those older and more experienced sailors' (Rouleau, 32–33). Experiential authority in *Two Years* is related to the subjects of folklore and age but its invocation does not serve as a way of invalidating formal authority. Neither does it serve to support formal authority; Dana's experienced seamen occasionally surface to share wisdoms about maritime folklore or to act as spokesperson but they never take the captain's place in the shipboard hierarchy.

While Dana's narrative does mention older seamen's experiential authority, it does not seem that 'seniority and experience conferred real power' in the ships he sailed in (Rouleau, 56). This is especially evident early in the narrative when Dana describes discussing maritime superstitions with the cook after the death of a shipmate. Dana, still a green hand, dismisses the cook's superstitions but the man is not to be swayed. Dana 'tried to reason with him about it, but he had *the best of all arguments*, that from experience, at hand, and was not to be moved' (Dana, 38; emphasis added). Dana recognises that the cook's experience as a seafaring man makes a compelling argument but is not convinced. Instead, the cook seems to convince only himself further of the truth of his superstitious thoughts but despite relating his direct experience with the superstition in question (whether or not Finnish sailors are wizards with the ability to control the weather), Dana remains sceptical.

The cook's experience is evidently not enough for Dana and he has to call on 'John, who was the oldest seaman aboard, and would know if anybody did' (Dana, 38). John has indeed had an uncanny encounter with a Finnish sailor, who was supposedly responsible for a head wind lasting two weeks. Shut in the forepeak without food, the Finnish sailor 'could not stand it any longer' and allegedly changed the wind direction (Dana, 39). Dana's reply to this statement shows the two experienced men were unable to convince the green hand of their superstitious beliefs: 'I told him I had no doubt that it was true, and that it would have been odd if the wind had not changed in fifteen days Finn or no Finn [*sic*]' (Dana, 39). Despite Dana's emphasis on both men's shipboard

experience in his description of the episode, the men's experiential authority does not persuade him to start believing in the maritime superstitions. The fact that he is writing years after the events allows him to be sceptical. It is striking that Dana, who felt alienated by the sailors' speech and actions, hoping to fit in with the crew, rejects more experienced crewmembers' yarns. Once again, Dana alienates himself from the forecastle fraternity – by not placing appropriate value on the supernatural yarns that these experienced sailors spin, he others himself, missing out on a crucial element of shipboard life.

Berger looks at the sense of inclusion and exclusion created by yarn-spinning, commenting on the 'enigmatic lure' of these yarns directed at the in-crowd, while simultaneously fuelling a sense of exclusion (Berger, 'Antebellum Fantasies', 47). Berger's interpretation of the yarn as signifier of exclusion neglects to look at the yarn's function, its attempts to bridge the gap between the experienced in-crowd and the green hands. It does not only consolidate knowledge within the fraternity, but also allows green hands to become part of the in-crowd. Dana, too, does not understand its function and is therefore unable to fully assimilate into shipboard life. Once again, Dana 'doubles himself in his personal anecdotes, splitting into controlling narrator and helpless protagonist'; Dana the helpless green hand juxtaposed with Dana the sailor-author.¹⁷ This opposition not only creates distance between narrative and narrator but also enables Dana to be more judgmental of the events going on in the ship. He is able to adopt a sceptical tone when speaking of the seafaring life because he features in the narrative twice. This is important because it enables Dana to prevent complete assimilation into the seafaring culture. Dana, however, by distancing himself from his green hand double, prevents the loss of his true self and is able to go back ashore and to normal life.

Dana's double vision of himself as occupant and occupier of the forecastle shows him as both ambivalent and disruptive of his own authority.¹⁸ The double, the other within the self,

¹⁷ Robin Lydenberg, 'Freud's Uncanny Narratives', *PLMA*, 112 (1997), 1072–86; p. 1079.

¹⁸ Homi K. Bhabha, 'Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse' in *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 2004), 85–92, p. 88.

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simultaneously serves to maintain a link with life on land and to create distance between the generally well-to-do, eloquent and sophisticated protagonist and the coarse, alien and threatening figure of the sailor. Dana's double vision moreover shows that experiential authority does not always carry the same weight as formal authority would. The distance between Dana's two selves allows formal authority to take precedence. Dana's narrative is not presented as a fictional account of a sea voyage and yarn-spinning does not function as foreshadowing. There is no point later in the narrative where these warnings about sailors of specific nationalities or natural occurrences return as a major plot point. Dana can (and does) shrug off the superstitious warnings because they will have no further effect on either his voyage or his retelling of it. This invocation of experiential authority does show that it was an important feature of shipboard life, and its confrontation with formal authority moreover shows how it could threaten the balance of power. This threat however, never fully develops into actual dominance over formal authority.

Dana aimed to give a true account of shipboard life, and for him experiential authority was not a vital part of it. The formal authority, embodied in the figure of the captain, was far more visible and therefore relevant. There is nevertheless a sense of haunting in this hulking figure whose presence is always felt but who is rarely seen; he 'sleeps all the daytime, and comes and goes at night as he chooses' (Dana, 241). The captain has freedom that the crewmembers do not possess and he uses this freedom to control the seamen. His control reaches even into the sailor's shore life; as the sailors, 'having been *ordered* to be on the beach by sundown', enjoy their liberty when the vessel is brought into foreign ports, the captain's presence is felt even on shore (Dana, 109; emphasis added). The absolute power and disavowal of presence of Dana's haunting captain resurfaces in maritime supernatural narratives in the figure of the cursed captain Vanderdecken, whose crew is collectively affected by their captain's curse.

Rouleau's description of how officers attempted to make a sailor out of a green hand echoes the captain's uncanny influence on his crew: 'They *compelled* him to follow their orders, obey their laws, eat their food, and bear it as best as he could' (Rouleau, 31; emphasis added). It is as though formal authority acts like a spell in order to transform the green hands into sailors, an irresistible

force the sailor cannot help but obey. As Dana's narrative evidences, however, becoming a knowledgeable man of the sea required hard work and privation, and is not the result of a spell. The sailor is just as responsible for his development as his captain. This is not to say that Dana's shipboard experience was not determined mainly by the captain's absolute formal authority. From Dana's narrative it emerges that the collaboration between captain and crew was the unavoidable result of the captain's formal authority. It forced the crew to comply with the captain's wishes, orders and commands, even when these cross a written or unwritten line. This strong sense of formal authority helps establish a context in which a character like the Flying Dutchman can appear – who haunts the ship both as a ghost and as an authority figure whose tyrannical nature results in disaster that befalls not only him, but the crew in its entirety. Authority is like a spell and compels the crew to follow the captain's orders. Like the cursed Dutchman's crew, Dana and his shipmates have to bear the captain's orders and do what he commands without questioning him outright. After all, the captain is always right.

Folklore and superstition did not play a large part in Dana's shipboard experience. Much like experiential authority, these ungraspable, unquantifiable elements of seafaring are secondary, yet, playing out in the background they assert their presence nevertheless. These are important elements of maritime culture, shaping the seafaring experience with rituals aimed at ordering and explaining the dangerous sea space. Folklore 'provided a common reference point for a shared fate' (Rouleau, 44). Marcus Rediker argues that sailors' experience and outlook were 'fundamentally shaped by the nature and setting of their work, [...] based upon an essentially materialistic view of nature, a desire to make an omnipotent nature seem orderly and comprehensible, and a need to entrust to each other their prospects for survival' (Rediker, *Deep Blue Sea*, 185–86). There are a few instances in *Two Years* where ritual and superstition are put forward as prominent features of shipboard life. These instances predominantly take place when something out of the ordinary happens, such as the unexpected death of a fellow seaman. This shift in balance creates space for emotions in this masculine world, as the demise of a shipmate was 'visible, poignant, commonplace, and never impersonal' (Rediker, *Deep Blue Sea*, 193).

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Death, says Dana, 'is at all times solemn, but never so much so as at sea. When a man falls overboard at sea and is lost there is a suddenness in the event, and a difficulty in realizing it, which give to it an air of awful mystery. Then too, at sea – to use a homely but expressive phrase – you *miss* a man so much' (Dana, 36). Dana speaks of the difficulty of comprehending the sudden death and disappearance of a shipmate, which makes it a terribly mysterious event, impossible to fathom. Death at sea, argues Hester Blum, 'disables the experiential model proposed by sea narratives' (Blum, 159). Experience does not prepare sailors for the sudden death of a fellow sailor, as

sailors predicate their engagement with and in literary culture on the mechanical practices of sea labor, which are enumerated in their narratives. Thus if metaphysical understanding can be derived from nautical experience, as sea narratives suggest, then the failure of death at sea literally to account for itself would be understandably disorienting (Blum, 178).

Death at sea is often inexplicable and unexpected, especially accidental deaths which come suddenly and without warning. Experience does not provide an explanation for these deaths or sudden disappearances. A possible origin of superstitions in the maritime space can be made out here, where, according to Rouleau, ghosts often appeared in the form of deceased shipmates 'seeking redress' or serve as a 'warning to the captain against the continuance of [...] severe punishments' (Rouleau, 58). Dana only lightly touches upon this folkloristic side of shipboard death and instead focuses on both the human and practical consequences. He emphasises that at sea, a man is terribly missed, both in the sense that he is missed as a person as well as his presence as a co-worker.

Dana describes how the tightly-knit forecastle fraternity, suddenly one man short, is affected by their loss emotionally – 'for months and months [they] see no forms and hear no voices but their own, and one is taken suddenly from among them, and they miss him at every turn' – and practically; 'the crew go more carefully aloft' (Dana, 36). He is missed *at every turn*; the man's absence is felt by his shipmates, but he is also missed at every literal turn of the oar, wheel and rope. The same amount of work is now to be carried out by less men; Dana does not complain, but

states the simple fact that death at sea does not mean work is over.

Religion, too, is no great feature of Dana's shipboard experience. Sailors only pray for a change in the wind direction or for their lost shipmates' souls. It appears Dana's ship is what Rouleau calls a 'spiritual void' and a 'vacuum' and he argues that superstition should be seen as 'a replacement or a temporary substitution' for religion (Rouleau, 35). He maintains it represented a 'universal religion' (Rouleau, 35). However, Rouleau contradicts this concept of a religious vacuum by saying 'seamen could keep their previous beliefs [...] as long as they kept them to themselves' (Rouleau, 39). A vacuum implies an absence, whereas this last statement implies superstition and religion existed side by side. Indeed, in *Two Years*, the ship appears empty of any kind of religion, but this vacuum is not filled, as Rouleau suggests, by superstition. It is simply a void, unaddressed and ignored by Dana.

The link between real-life maritime superstitions and my thesis subject speaks for itself. The meaning of the Flying Dutchman is often rather bluntly stated along the lines of representing 'the specter of death that haunted every deep-sea sailor' (Rediker, *Outlaws*, 20). While this thesis aims to refine this interpretation, it is undeniable that the Dutchman legend is linked to the potential for death at sea. The tragedy of the Dutchman's obliviousness to his fate, and particularly to the fact that his relatives are not still alive, as he believes, pervades most versions. The Dutchman legend is not needed to convey the potential for death at sea; the possibility of never returning pervades Hodgson's narratives of shipwrecked, beleaguered derelicts as much as the novelised yarns based on the Dutchman legend. The Dutchman can be read as a warning for sailors who allow the potential religious vacuum that appears on ships to exist, encouraging sailors to continue observing religious behaviour at sea. Instead of reading the novelised yarns of the maritime supernatural as expressions of this religious anxiety, I focus on the narratives' treatment of supernatural elements, suggesting that maritime superstitions are employed in other ways to engage with contemporary crises such as religious anxiety.

This section set out to explore maritime culture uninterrupted by ghosts, to consider the cultural space that is the ship. It has done so by considering crucial elements of this maritime

culture; labour, hierarchy and authority, and attitudes to folklore. The potential of the death and the supernatural haunts the ship, creating a space where survival is continuously on the minds of those inhabiting her. This thesis' focus on the maritime supernatural is necessarily grounded in the natural world of the ship – maritime fiction and non-fiction of the nineteenth century written by experienced sailor-authors emphasise the real-world experience and reliability that stems from it (Berger, 35). A space that is plagued by duality, contradiction and unfamiliarity, the ship is a naturally uncanny space, inviting the supernatural into the forecastle. An examination of how the uncanny, the disruption of 'the familiar, homely and secure sense of reality and normality', applies to the ship shows how the supernatural enters easily into the maritime imagination (Botting, 11).

1.2 The uncanny

'To many people the acme of the uncanny is represented by anything to do with death, dead bodies, revenants, spirits and ghosts'.¹⁹ Thus Sigmund Freud, whose 1919 article 'The Uncanny' challenges Ernst Jentsch's 1906 essay 'On the Psychology of the Uncanny'. Jentsch interprets the uncanny as the feeling resulting from the experience of something mysterious and inexplicable, whereas Freud focuses on the relationship between repression and the uncanny. The uncanny is often referred to in the context of supernatural literature and ghost stories.²⁰ As Pramod Nayar has pointed out, however, 'while the uncanny incorporates the spectre, it is not limited to it'.²¹

Throughout this thesis, the word 'uncanny' denotes intrusion and disruption. When unexpected things happen, it is uncanny. This sense structures the maritime supernatural; it relies on disruption that breaks the seafaring routine. It denotes the familiar-turned-unfamiliar represented by the ship

¹⁹ Sigmund Freud, 'The Uncanny' 1919. Translated by David McIntock (London: Penguin Books, 2003), 123–62; p. 148. Subsequent references are to this edition and are given in parentheses.

²⁰ Julia Briggs, *Night Visitors: The Rise and Fall of the English Ghost Story* (London: Faber, 1977), p. 16. Subsequent references are to this edition and are given in parentheses.

²¹ Pramod K. Nayar, 'The Postcolonial Uncanny: The Politics of Dispossession in Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide*', *College Literature*, 37 (2010), 88–119; p. 91.

at supernatural sea.

Two of the many interpretations of the uncanny element (opposed to structure) are relevant for the narratives discussed in my thesis; relating to persons and relating to spaces. Freud's article famously mentions the automaton, the not-quite person, as the archetype of the uncanny – a theme he both borrows from Jentsch as well as rejects.²² Elsewhere, however, as a concept concerned with both physical and mental perceptions of space, the uncanny after Freud considers places and moments where one feels 'simultaneously "at home" and "not at home"' (Nayar, 89). Repression is not an element of the uncanny I focus on because the narratives present issues frankly and unsubtly, as sailors would do themselves. The uncanny's original German *unheimlich* – unhomely – explains the connection with disturbed domesticity, where once-familiar places or spaces are disrupted by something no longer familiar.

Three elements of the uncanny relate to the seafaring experience, and highlighting them here will resonate with the discussion of the literary supernatural at sea in the next chapter. Firstly, the double, or doppelgänger, 'duplication, ego-splitting, revenant, or the recurrence of traits, characters, destinies' are features that typically characterise the uncanny in literature.²³ Similar to the Gothic double, which is concerned with internal duplicity, the uncanny double is taken throughout this thesis to signify an external kind of duality. Uncanny doubleness is also characteristic of the sea voyage narrative. Robert Foulke, discussing the nature of voyaging, points out how the seafaring experience is double; while the journey has beginning and endings, starting and stopping points 'in the unfolding of chronological time [...], time is also cyclical, just as the rhythm of waves is cyclical, because the patterns of a ship's daily routine, watch on and watch off, highlights endless recurrence'.²⁴ Not only is the nature of seafaring one of repetition and recurrence, one day uncannily like the next, sailors writing about their experience cast a version of

²² Hélène Cixous, 'Fiction and its Phantoms: A Reading of Freud's *Das Unheimliche* (The "Uncanny")', *New Literary History*, 7 (1976), 525–48; p. 532.

²³ Samuel Weber, 'The Sideshow, or: Remarks on a Canny Moment', *MLN*, 88 (1973), 1102–33; p. 1105.

²⁴ Robert Foulke, *The Sea Voyage Narrative* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1997), p. 9. Subsequent references are to this edition and are given in parentheses as (Foulke, *Narrative*, page).

themselves as the protagonist, creating their own doppelganger.

Secondly, the transformation, for a green-hand sailor, of the forecastle from hostile, unfamiliar space into familiar, fraternal place is reminiscent of Jentsch' definition of the uncanny as a feeling of intellectual uncertainty that arises when something familiar appears in a different context and becomes uncomfortably unfamiliar.²⁵ It denotes a sense of being not-at-home or not at ease with a 'thing' or situation (Jentsch, 8). By experience – intellectual mastery of the situation – the unfamiliar becomes familiar once again, but this does not necessarily make the situation non-threatening. As Dana's experience shows, the inexperienced sailor's first sea journey is marked by intellectual uncertainty. Land-based society and its rules no longer seem to apply at sea, where an alternate system of authority based on experience periodically overrides the formal system of authority based on rank. Once the green hand is initiated in the forecastle fraternity and becomes familiar with this social structure, the sense of uncanny is resolved.

Thirdly, the uncanny of the unhomely space represented by the ship engages with the roots of the original German for uncanny, *unheimlich*, and its opposite *heimlich*. The word *heimlich*, Samuel Weber suggests, 'is the repository of ambivalent meanings, signifying on the one hand, the familiar and domestic, on the other and simultaneously the concealed and the hidden' (Weber, 1105). Nayar argues the uncanny 'is about the human "sense" of house and home' (Nayar, 89). It is a perception of space once again plagued by ambiguity; it is simultaneously home and not-home, and applies to the ship at sea as inhabited space, not-quite domestic space. Nayar's emphasis on the spatiality of the uncanny, that it starts out in a specific cultural and geographical context, is important because it evidences the potential of spaces to be uncanny. This is the opposite of the green hand's unfamiliar space becoming familiar through experience. The real-life ship, once familiar, can become unfamiliar again when disturbed by the supernatural. This change can be caused by conflict, but also unexpected weather; storms in particular can make a ship unrecognizable as she is tossed around by waves and winds.

²⁵ Ernst Jentsch, 'On the Psychology of the Uncanny' 1906, *Angelaki*, 2 (1996), 7–21. Translated by Roy Sellars, p. 8.

The not-quite domesticity of the ship complicates a straightforward engagement with the uncanny in the maritime supernatural narratives discussed in this thesis. The effect of the uncanny relies on the disruption of homeliness, or at least of that what is familiar. How the uncanny works in the unhomely, often unfamiliar space of the ship is of key importance to this thesis because it suggests the particular kind of haunting in this space is different from hauntings on land. It piles on a double sense of uncanny, in itself an expression of uncanny duality. It links the actual spatiality of the ship with the structure of the narrative. The ship is intruded by the maritime supernatural, which, in the form of the Flying Dutchman, is a familiar figure cast in a new, unfamiliar shape, creating an uncanny sense of not-quite recognition. The uncanny is personified as something that *is*. Yet, the fact that this intrusion takes place on a ship, a space that is double and contradictory in itself, gives an extra dimension to the execution of the uncanny in the maritime supernatural. The uncanny is already part of the narrative before the supernatural has arrived; it becomes something that *does*. It allows for the uncanny to underpin the narrative and devise the narrative structure. It creates a sense of duality and intrusion at narrative level.

Weber argues the uncanny cannot only be defined as a collection of thematic terms but instead has to be considered as an objective structure (Weber, 1115). This line of thought is further developed by Susan Bernstein, who sees Freud's inability to define the uncanny as telling of the nature of the concept. When reading the uncanny, its effect comes before conceptualising it: we do not notice repetition until it has already occurred. Before we have a name for it, the uncanny has already taken place.²⁶ Bernstein argues the 'objective structure' of the uncanny cannot be expressed in thematic terms, but instead 'demands *reading*' (Bernstein, 1112). The uncanny effect of a story 'emerges in its telling, not its truth' (Bernstein, 1135). This structural approach to explaining the uncanny opens the term to a wider conceptualisation and invites themes larger and more dynamic than spectres and automatons to engage with these narratives.

The uncanny appears as structure, not only as 'frightening object', throughout the maritime

²⁶ Susan Bernstein, 'It Walks: The Ambulatory Uncanny', *MLN*, 118 (2003), 1111–39; p. 1125.

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supernatural story by inviting narrative doubles through yarn-spinning (Cixious, 526). Unlike real-life yarn-spinning which is focused on sharing experiences in order to prevent dangerous situations, yarn-spinning in maritime supernatural narratives creates a context in which the supernatural is expected to occur. It is similarly based on sharing experience, but with the unequivocal outcome that the yarn will be played out later in the narrative. It is a warning, often relating the misfortunes of other ships' encounters with the supernatural, which usually ends at least in shipwreck. Later in the narrative, the recipient of the yarn finds himself in the same situation as the unfortunates in the yarn, faced with the supernatural and on the verge of death – which, as it usually concerns the protagonist, is often evaded. The duality of the maritime supernatural narrative shows how reading the uncanny as structure can be employed.

This section was aimed at consolidating ideas on the uncanny and setting up the ship as a naturally uncanny place where the supernatural is likely to occur. It suggests the maritime world is naturally uncanny where the supernatural is expected. This materialises in fiction. Natural occurrences are given supernatural meanings by people and do not arise from the occurrences themselves; there are always elements in nature that are unknown to individuals or sailors as a group. By speaking to each other about their experiences in narrative form, sailors in fiction create an environment in which supernatural events seem more likely to materialise. The supernatural is to be expected if it is talked about by everyone. Hierarchies and the influence of power on interpersonal relations are also a source of haunting, where seen and unseen powers influence the shipboard experience of individual sailors as well as the fore-castle fraternity as a whole.

This has led to a twofold interpretation of the uncanny as something that *is* and something that *does*. The uncanny is both element and structure in maritime supernatural narratives; it does not merely point to one specific element of the text (spectres, cursed men who suddenly stop moving, unfamiliar places) because it can be related to the very structure of the narrative. As maritime supernatural narratives were written only occasionally over the long nineteenth century, the concerns they respond to industrial and cultural changes taking place. While the concept of a cursed ship is not beyond understanding, the complex nature of the curse itself results in failure to

completely grasp the effects of the curse. It is too unnatural to be defined or understood and repeated exposure and prolonged experience do nothing to relieve the observer from the uncanny feeling. The uncanny divides events into those that are familiar and those that are unfamiliar, which in the maritime supernatural occur simultaneously in the appearance of the cursed ship. As a theme, the uncanny appears as representations of spaces and persons rendered uncomfortably unfamiliar through the supernatural. As structure, the uncanny is a framework that needs to be read in order to be understood. This reading will be undertaken in subsequent chapters.

Chapter 2: The maritime supernatural as a genre.

In his essay 'On the Supernatural in Fictitious Composition' (1827), Walter Scott states that the love for the supernatural 'is common to all classes of mankind'.¹ It finds its roots 'in the facts upon which our holy religion is founded', but also in 'the principles of our nature, which teach us that while we are probationers in this sublunary state, we are neighbours to, and encompassed by the shadowy world' (Scott, 60). The supernatural is everywhere, Scott argues, but despite his engagement with oral traditions and depictions of 'picturesque and often wild landscape' in his own literature, where it extends to the sea, he restricts himself to land-based expressions of literary supernatural.²

Doing so overlooks a literary genre that was widely read in the nineteenth century, which I call the maritime supernatural genre. A subgenre of maritime fiction, the maritime supernatural was written by experienced sailors-turned-authors who mostly wrote maritime adventure fiction and occasionally ventured into the supernatural. The maritime supernatural fits within Scott's parameters. It too was enjoyed by a large audience through serialised publication in periodicals, making maritime yarns available for a land-based audience. Moreover, maritime superstition can have roots in religion and brings to the fore the supernatural in everyday life. With the consciousness that this chapter will be relatively schematic, I pursue a definition of the maritime supernatural genre in three ways. It creates a frame for the maritime supernatural genre. It considers modes of spectrality at sea that are at stake throughout this thesis. It looks at three elements of the supernatural tale – the supernatural actor, the haunted space and the haunting environment – and considers these in the maritime context.

Srdjan Smajic contextualises the ghost story in nineteenth-century British society in a 2003

¹ Walter Scott, 'On the Supernatural in Fictitious Composition; and particularly on the works of Ernest Theodore William Hoffmann', *Foreign Quarterly Review*, 1 (1827), 60–68; p. 60.

² Robin Mayhead, *Walter Scott* (London: Routledge, 1968), pp. 3–4.

article on seeing ghosts. Smajic asserts that, unlike other nineteenth-century literary genres and particularly the realist novel, ghost stories seem to be ‘fundamentally ahistorical; ghost stories are probably the last place one would think to look for evidence of how industrialisation, Darwinism or colonial expansion affected Victorian society’.³ Smajic’s justification that the ghost story says something about real things is no longer necessary. Realism and the supernatural do not mutually exclude each other. This has very quickly become normal thinking. In his 2011 *A History of the Modern British Ghost Story*, Simon Hay argues, for example, that ‘[r]ealist novels [...] and ghost stories alike are engaged in a project of teaching us how to think about, giving us a language and a cognitive framework for understanding the social forms that make up our everyday reality’.⁴ He notes how nineteenth-century ghost stories ‘are dialectically engaged with the realist project, in pursuit of the same end – the representation of the structural truth in society’, and suggests that spectral narratives warn that ‘access to this kind of knowledge is not without consequences’ (Hay, 25).

Hay touches on an anxiety of authenticity that was prevalent in the nineteenth century. Authors, in attempts to make their supernatural narratives more believable in a society that collectively pursued evidence and authenticity, resorted to various way of asserting the veracity of their narratives.⁵ Classic horror novels like *Frankenstein* (1818) or *Dracula* (1897), for instance, written as a sequence of letters or journal entries, aim to assert the truthfulness of their narratives.⁶ This epistolary style creates authority; the author is cited as merely the editor or receiver of strange documents containing descriptions of unnatural events.

Maritime narratives of the same period have a similar anxiety around authenticity. The

³ Srdjan Smajic, ‘The Trouble with Ghost-Seeing: Vision, Ideology, and Genre in the Victorian Ghost Story’, *ELM*, 70 (2003), 1107–35, p. 1108; emphasis added. Subsequent references are to this edition and are given in parentheses.

⁴ Simon Hay, *A History of the Modern British Ghost Story* (London and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p. 22.

⁵ Peter Lamont, ‘Spiritualism and a Mid-Victorian Crisis of Evidence’, *The Historical Journal*, 47 (2004), 897–920; p. 917.

⁶ Anna E. Clark, ‘Frankenstein; or the Modern Protagonist’, *ELH*, 81 (2014), 245–68; pp. 216–17. See also Robert Ready, ‘Textula’ in *Journal of Narrative Theory* (2010) for an exploration of the use of texts in Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*. Ready notes the use of letters in e.g. Van Helsing’s detecting method (p. 288).

epistolary novel is relatively uncommon in maritime literature; William Hope Hodgson occasionally uses it and *The Death Ship* is purported to be taken from 'the papers of the late Geoffrey Fenton of Poplar, Master Mariner'.⁷ More often, the authors' maritime rank or experience at sea are referred to in the novels' subtitle or introduction. The reality effect of maritime novels is moreover increased by what Margaret Cohen calls 'active description', where sailor terminology and actions are presented in a way as if obviously known to the reader.⁸ Little or no explanation is given; the experience of reading these tales is intended to be as real as possible without stepping foot on board ship. Aside from active description, maritime narratives of the nineteenth century often relied on their authors' know-how for credibility, mostly by noting their maritime rank on the title pages of their novels (Berger, 'Antebellum Fantasies', 35).

A subgenre of the maritime adventure narrative, the maritime supernatural story has a similar emphasis on the veracity of actions and events. It aims to convey the reality of seafaring disturbed by the supernatural, and in doing so voices existing real-world anxieties to do with progress and change. This is unlike maritime adventure fiction, which tends to focus on its protagonists' development from green hand to experienced captain or ship owner. Maritime adventure fiction, despite its protagonists' difficulties in their attempts to climb up the maritime hierarchy, is not preoccupied with anxiety as much as with the expression of maritime ability and craft. As such, maritime adventure fiction expresses confidence in seafaring that is disturbed in the maritime supernatural.

The maritime supernatural figure emerges as a frontier figure, testing the boundary between the known and the unknown. Haunting is interpreted as an intrusion of past upon present, of the unfamiliar upon the inhabited space or familiar geographical place. It strongly relates to space and the physical act of intrusion. Haunting in these narratives is acute and external; there is no space for psychological, potential or linguistic doubt. The ghosts are real and can be interacted with. At

⁷ William Clark Russell, *The Death Ship* 1888 (London: Chatto & Windus, 1901), title page. Subsequent references are to this edition and are given in parentheses as (Russell, *Death Ship*, page).

⁸ Margaret Cohen, 'Traveling Genres', *New Literary History*, 34 (2003), 481–99; p. 489. Subsequent references will be to this edition and will be given in parentheses as (Cohen, 'Travelling Genres', page).

the same time, these visceral ghosts express an intrusion of an inside, disturbing existing discourses about religion, labour and nostalgia in the maritime space, allowing anxieties to surface.

Haunting is defined as the effect created by invisible, powerful forces that make their presence known in everyday life.⁹ In a maritime context, yarn-spinning is mostly responsible for dispersing and distributing maritime folklore among the seafaring folk. As outlined in the introduction to this thesis, through this multi-layered way of communicating experience, maritime folklore reaches shore and evolves into the maritime supernatural genre. Yarn-spinning on ships occurs in the fore-castle fraternity when seasoned salts share their experiences with green hands and other crew members to put the incomprehensible shipboard world in order. This circulation of practical information helps explain and classify phenomena, simultaneously recording experience and distributing it in order to create both a sense of companionship, and understanding of the maritime world.

Brian Rouleau has discussed this function of yarn-spinning on ships, and notes its relation to sailors' religious experience: 'Sailor lore had supernatural components that contained practical lessons. This allowed it to be utilized even if not believed' (Rouleau, 39). He further shows that sailor lore and yarn-spinning was a good way for sailors to voice unhappiness before it degenerated into conflict. Jason Berger, in his discussion on fictional depictions of shipboard storytelling, argues that fictionalised yarn-spinning 'come close to romanticizing the communal nature of shipboard life' (Berger, 'Antebellum Fantasies', 47). While yarn-spinning does create an in-crowd with an 'enigmatic lure', this is not the main purpose of shipboard storytelling (Berger, 'Antebellum Fantasies', 47). Instead, yarn-spinning, both as literary theme as well as real-life pastime, is aimed at 'shar[ing] past experiences in confirmation of such [ill] omens and debating the possible implications for the present' (Rouleau, 38). The crucial difference between fictional and non-fictional yarn-spinning is that fictional yarn-spinning serves to create a context in which

⁹ Avery F. Gordon, *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and Sociological Imagination* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), p. xvi.

See also Julian Wolfreys, *Victorian Hauntings: Spectrality, Gothic, the Uncanny and Literature* (2001).

supernatural events are *more likely* to occur, whereas real-life yarn-spinning consolidates practical knowledge and serves as warning. It hopes to prevent the appearance of spectres, while fictional yarn-spinning prepares the narrative for their arrival.

Yarn-spinning as literary element creates an uncanny version of a story within the story. Fictional representation of yarn-spinning signifies a move away from the purpose of real-life yarns. If yarns are meant to create coherence on board of real ships, on their fictional counterparts they often cause disintegration. By representing yarn-spinning, then, the novel becomes less like a yarn. The events narrated by the act of yarn-spinning resemble the scene that is later played out by the narrative's characters. The yarn is often relayed via multiple channels. In Russell's *The Death Ship*, the carpenter remarks that 'there's some talk going about among the men concerning the old Dutchman that was cursed last century. My mate Joe Marner, told me that Jimmy – meaning the cabin boy – was telling some of the crew this morning, that he heard the captain say the Dutchman's been sighted' (Russell, *Death Ship*, 8). Rather than result in a loss of accuracy and believability, these numerous layers creates a context in which the ghost is more likely to appear. The reader is prepared for the Dutchman's arrival which inevitably occurs a few chapters later. This outcome of literary yarn-spinning is the opposite of the intended result of real-life yarn-spinning in which sharing ways of dispelling him is aimed at preventing the appearance of the supernatural.

Instead of presenting a danger to the integrity of the yarn, fictional yarn-spinning's numerous layers show the yarn is commonly accepted. The yarn becomes believable, not by removing layers of information, but by adding them. This creates a sense of foreboding, horrible anticipation, which haunts the narrative and its characters. An example of this can again be found in *The Death Ship*. After hearing and discussing yarns about the Dutchman, one captain Skevington, faced with a potential apparition, cannot keep calm and his monomaniac obsession with a possible supernatural appearance eventually drives him to insanity and suicide. The potential threat is increased through multiple discussions about the nature of the spectral ship and the consequences of her appearance. Although the phantom ship does not appear until after Skevington has killed himself, it is never implied the captain's suicide was senseless. It is necessary that Skevington dies,

since '[e]motional restraint and stoicism in the face of hardship' were the preferred attitudes on board, particularly in the case of a captain, and Skevington's monomania-turned-hysteria is the absolute opposite (Rouleau, 44). As an unfit example of English *and* maritime authority, Skevington needs to relinquish his position as the highest in command to those who are more suited to the task, and in the most dramatic way.

Real-life yarn-spinning is responsible for the widespread superstitions that are concerned with the ship as a particular haunted or haunting space (Rediker, *Outlaws*, 19). As a result of the multi-layered dissemination of maritime folklore, haunted ships and ships that haunt exist side by side. In fiction, yarn-spinning takes on another function aside from creating a supernatural context. The recurrent allusions to yarns and situations that mirror the current narrative events are invocations of the past. Yarn-spinning is the recurrence of the archaic: storytelling within the narrative creates uncanny doubles of stories that are repeated with unexpected, unpredictable differences (Benjamin, 363). Due to their regular invocations, real-life yarns influence the narratives in which they appear. They set a precedent which, as novelised yarns part of the yarn-spinning tradition, needs to be alluded to and limits the author's agency over his own narrative.

The sense of compulsion in maritime supernatural narratives comes not only from the use of pre-existing yarns. Maritime supernatural stories tend to be based on curse narratives or contain a curse element. Although exceptions do exist, curses play a decisive role in the narrative direction of most maritime supernatural stories. A valuable definition for "curse", or malediction, can be found in Denis Diderot's eighteenth-century *Encyclopédie* as "'Malédiction": Imprécation qu'on prononce contre quelque objet mal-faisant [Malediction: Curse that is pronounced over any evil-doing object]'.¹⁰ Diderot's definition is useful because, representing the ideas of the Enlightenment, it uses reason to explain seemingly unreasonable and unnatural occurrences, a conjunction that is found throughout the nineteenth-century maritime narratives discussed in this thesis. Moreover, as Diderot's encyclopaedia predates this thesis' time-frame, the nineteenth-century narratives all

¹⁰ Denis Diderot, 'Malédiction', *Encyclopédie ou Dictionnaire Raisonné des Sciences, des Arts et des Métiers* 1751–1772, translation mine; emphasis added.

(hypothetically, at least) respond to its ideas. Diderot's definition places the offender in a distinctly passive light. The cursed entity is not an active agent but is given the role of passive object. The cursed offender's agency is removed and his haunting dictated by the curse.

The curse determines the narrative direction of the maritime supernatural tale, removing agency from its author as well as from its characters. This view has not been taken before; studies of nineteenth-century curse narratives are scarce and those that exist do not consider the impact of the curse on the narrative structure. Maritime literature studies have not focused on curses. One important study on curses and agency is Peter Hynes' 1989 article 'Curses, Oaths, and Narratives in Richardson's *Clarissa*'. Although *Clarissa* (1748) is not a supernatural tale and Hynes suggests that the curse put on Clarissa by her father for eloping loses its severity when the other events in the novel are considered, his article creates important parameters for the study of the effect of curses on the development of a narrative.

Hynes considers the narrative role of the curse, arguing it 'seeks to determine the course of events through the invocation of divine (or diabolical) interference'.¹¹ Clarissa's response to the curse is profound; she is not only heartbroken but is also afraid it will work (Hynes, 313-314). The 'ostensible efficacy' gives more credulity to the curse's power as the narrative events seem 'to be acting out the plot already laid down in the father's powerful words' (Hynes, 314). When the curse is ultimately withdrawn, Clarissa seems to have learnt her lesson and 'her attention turns to the task of soliciting a last blessing from the obdurate Mr. Harlowe' (Hynes, 315). Hynes shows that the curse does not actually determine the narrative action. He shows how the curse only appears to be acted out by Lovelace but that the narrative events are the inevitable result of a system of cause and effect, not determined by the curse itself.

Although Hynes argues that in *Clarissa* the curse turns out to be no more than 'mere words', his reading of the novel does suggest the curse *can* be read as narrative framework (Hynes, 323). In the Flying Dutchman legend, the conditions of the curse itself constitute the main narrative

¹¹ Peter Hynes, 'Curses, Oaths, and Narrative in Richardson's *Clarissa*', *ELH*, 56.2 (1989), 311–26; p. 313.

framework and are part of its discourse. Supernatural events call up the question of agency; who or what is able to act in supernatural circumstances and who allows them to act. Agency is with the curse; characters cannot fully act on their own accord because they are limited by what the curse allows or disallows them to do. Moreover, authors using the Dutchman legend as framework for their adaptation are similarly bound to a certain set of narrative elements. They too do not possess full agency over their own novel. The legend is inexorable; there are narrative elements that have to be featured, or it ceases to be an adaptation of the Flying Dutchman legend. Authors who do not use maritime legends as framework for their narratives and instead only use particular themes or elements, have more freedom in the expression of their story. As will be shown in later chapters, the freedom allowed by remythologisation of the sea opens the narrative to ambiguous morality and discards traditional yarns' didacticism.

In maritime supernatural narratives, the curse is more than mere words. It has real power over the narrative and over its characters' agency; there is no human scheming that offers an alternative explanation to the supernatural events. Considering *how* agency is employed rather than by whom in ghost stories, as Debbora Battaglia remarks, 'ambiguat[es] authorship and authority'.¹² Agency becomes 'a vehicle or site for *problematizing* society [and] relations of power' (Battaglia, 506). In seafaring narratives, where hierarchical and experiential authority are important, the double role of agency as textual element and as discourse is troubling. Characters, cursed or not cursed, find themselves swept along by the course set out by the curse even before the narrative has started. As such, authority relations are distorted.

The curse provides a framework for the maritime supernatural narrative and in determining the course of the plot, it distorts power relations further. The role of largely unproblematic, heroic English sailor-protagonists in maritime adventure novels is complicated in supernatural sea stories where the use of the curse narrative sets out a course. The protagonist becomes a Jonah: Russell's *The Death Ship*, where Geoffrey is considered to be a disruptive person 'who threatened the

¹² Debbora Battaglia, 'Ambiguating Agency: The Case of Malinowski's Ghost', *American Anthropologist*, 99 (1997), 505–10; p. 506.

success of the journey' by the crew of the cursed ship (Rouleau, 50). Identifying someone as Jonah curses them; giving them the identity of the accursed figure others them and makes them dangerous without evidence that they really are.

The evil first mate of the spectral ship thinks Geoffrey's presence on the ship accounts for the *Braave's* inability to round the Cape. Unaware of the curse Vanderdecken brought down on the ship and her crew, Van Vogelaar asserts, 'I brought a curse into the ship when I handed you over the side; the devil craved for ye, and I should have let you sink into his maws' (Russell, *Death Ship*, 318). This reversal of perspective upsets the balance between the known and the unexpected. While the reader and Geoffrey are aware of the curse, those who *are* cursed remain painfully oblivious. We do not expect to consider Geoffrey as one of the cursed, and this reversal of roles is disturbing when this is suggested by one who is actually cursed. The statement "you are cursed" embeds the contraposition "I am not; I am in God's grace".¹³ When this accusation is uttered by one who is cursed, it is unexpected and alienating.

The possibility of being cursed haunts the narrative and has the power to potentially disturb existing relationships between characters as well as between reader and novel. For a brief moment, the balance between the known and the unexpected is upset, and we come to consider the heroic Englishman as he is perceived by this antagonistic, anachronistic Dutchman. This Jonah is a plague who upsets the shipboard peace with his questions and concerns is the scourge of the Dutchmen. He fails 'to attune his behavior as closely to the others as they might deem necessary' (Rouleau, 50). The Jonah embodies the malignant other who, by dissociating himself with the shipboard fraternity reinforces the strength of that very fraternity. He is both a manifestation of the curse's duality and represents the question about the curse that these narratives attempt to answer.

As one of the most popular genres of the nineteenth century, the (land-based) ghost story is a good place to start this discussion. Storytelling is inextricably connected with ghost stories. If the

¹³ Linda M. Austin, 'The Lament and the Rhetoric of the Sublime', *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, 53 (1998), 279–306; p. 285.

maritime supernatural genre is the nautical equivalent of land-based ghost stories, yarn-spinning is the equivalent of storytelling. Other important elements that make up landed ghost stories must have their maritime equivalent, too. These elements are the supernatural actor, the haunted space and the haunting environment. These are elements shared between all ghost stories, distinguishing them from other narratives: a place where the supernatural occurs and an entity that conducts the supernatural, whether this is a (former) human or an object. They answer the questions where and who, respectively. These have an equivalent in the maritime supernatural genre to some extent, where moreover the locale and supernatural entity unite in the spectral ship. These narrative elements will be explored in detail in order to formulate the maritime supernatural genre and demarcate the literary context in which this thesis' narratives operate.

2.1 The supernatural actor

In maritime supernatural narratives, characters and events are often called 'ghostly' or 'ghost-like' (e.g. Russell, *Death Ship*, 168; 270; 312; Marryat, *Phantom Ship*, 142). Behaving *like* a ghost, however, does not mean the characters *are* ghosts. As discussed in the Introduction to this thesis, ephemeral ghosts are not the subject of discussion here, as the supernatural entities on ships are usually physically present. What I call the supernatural actor, then, refers to characters of an otherworldly nature, who do not exist in the real world outside the narrative, and whose existence within the narrative cannot be explained by natural means. These characters are the catalyst of the supernatural and fulfil the function of the spectre, haunting the living, whether as 'unseen forces that make themselves felt in everyday life' or as entities seemingly tangible and clearly visible, and yet untouchable and other (Wolfreys, 110). The cursed beings of maritime supernatural narratives hover between the two. In most narratives, their absence is as haunting as their presence because of the continuous expectation of their potential appearance. This dual effect of the curse means the supernatural actor can be there but not there. This section defines three key characteristics of the supernatural actor in the maritime supernatural genre; identity, punishment and agency.

Ghosts, state Michael Cox and R.A. Gilbert in their introduction to *The Oxford Book of English Ghost Stories*, must be ‘unquestionably dead’ so rationalisation of events is impossible.¹⁴ They return from the grave in order to warn, make amends, or interact in any other way with the living. This definition of a ghost is reasonable and recognisable. It also highlights the position of other kinds of supernatural actors that similarly haunt but are separated from the living in other ways: characters that are ghosts in function, but are not unquestionably dead. The ghost in the ghost story refers to a particular being, often a wisp of a spirit that returns from the dead with a specific purpose. It does not refer to other supernatural beings like werewolves, zombies and vampires, all of which have their own definition.

The Flying Dutchman, a visceral ghost of the maritime environment, has been separated from the living by the curse put on him by the Christian God. He is undead, meaning he occupies the liminal space between death and life. He haunts the imagination of sailors and seafaring men, whether he is physically close or makes his presence known through sailors spinning yarns about previous accounts of his apparitions. This yarn-spinning highlights the Dutchman’s temporal as well as spatial displacement; he is a revenant, representing one time and space, and appears in another. The a-temporality of the Dutchman is important, because it highlights the maritime supernatural’s complicated relationship with time, expressed most clearly (but not only) through nostalgia. Many novels discussed in this thesis are concerned with understanding the mechanics of the Dutchman curse and its effects on those affected. While the novels rarely come to a firm conclusion supported by all characters as well as the narrative itself, it is my aim here to take this typology further in order to more substantially define this important element of the maritime supernatural genre.

In her 2006 article on the sentimental victimisation of slave bodies in abolitionist fiction, Jeanne Elders DeWaard argues that in much nineteenth-century fiction, ‘the human body serves as

¹⁴ Michael Cox & R.A. Gilbert, *The Oxford Book of English Ghost Stories* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. ix.

an important marker of identity'.¹⁵ When the human body ceases to exist, its identity also disappears. In other words, when a person becomes a ghost, they can no longer be identified as an individual but instead as an entity that exceeds time and space. Smajic puts forward a similar argument about the lack of identity in spectres, asserting that 'if the specter is in some sense timeless, changing its appearance just enough to suit the sartorial fashion of the times, it bears repeating that theories of vision and ways of seeing are invariably contingent upon historical and cultural determinants' (Smajic, 1108). Smajic argues that the ghost seer and how they go about their business are more important than the ghost itself. Both DeWaard and Smajic suggest that a ghost cannot (or no longer) be defined as *somebody*. Smajic's argument moreover suggests that ghosts are essentially all the same; one ghost can be substituted with another without problem. What changes, they argue, is the way these supposedly timeless and identity-less ghosts are perceived by the ghost-seer.

These arguments are certainly not universally applicable. The effectiveness of a supernatural apparition more often than not relies on the recognition of a ghost as a friend or family member. Dickens' Scrooge is affected by Marley's return *because* it is Marley. If the ghost had been an imprint of his nephew or his clerk, the emotional impact of its return would be unlikely to result in notable change or character development in Scrooge. The tragedy of the loss of an old friend with whom we identify often affects us more than it would of a relative stranger. Hamlet would have been unlikely to set his revenge plot in motion if he had not recognised the ghost as his father.¹⁶ The ontology of the supernatural actor is not at stake here, although the nature of the Flying Dutchman's existence is debated, particularly in *The Death Ship*. It is suggested that the supernaturally extended life of the Dutchman and his crew has various explanations; life is sustained by the curse itself, by God or by the Devil. No definite answer is found about the conditions of the Dutchman's existence. It seems unknowable, although overall it is suggested life

¹⁵ Jeanne Elders DeWaard, "'The Shadow of the Law': Sentimental Interiority, Gothic Terror, and the Legal Subject', *Arizona Quarterly*, 62 (2006), 1–30; p. 8

¹⁶ Cedric Watts, *Harvester New Critical Introductions to Shakespeare: Hamlet* (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1988), p. 33.

is sustained as part of God's punishment. What is more important for the narrative effect is the recognition of the spectral apparition as the Flying Dutchman, his ship and his crew. Recognising (or not) the particular identity of the supernatural actor is important for the effect of the apparition in two ways: as signifier of what is inevitably going to happen, or, if recognition is impossible, as manifestation of the unknowability of the sea.

In the case of the Flying Dutchman, using an existing yarn identifies the story with the existing Dutchman historiography that largely relies of its coherence and effect on the identity of this ghost. It is the moment of recognition that inspires fear in those who are haunted by the Flying Dutchman because their experience tells them what is inevitably going to happen next. This is a key moment in most of the Dutchman narratives, and often the one illustrated opposite the novel's title page. Both the 1874 and 1895 reprints of Marryat's *The Phantom Ship*, both published by Routledge, feature the same image of the pilot Schriften pointing out to the Flying Dutchman's ship and exclaiming 'Philip Vanderdecken – that's the *Flying Dutchman*!'. An 1896 edition published by J.M. Dent and Sons also has the same scene as its frontispiece, as does another 1896 edition by Macmillan, with illustrations by H.R. Millar. This moment is key, because both experienced sailors in the narratives as well as landlubber-readers know what the consequences are of meeting with the Dutchman's ship. The ghost's identity and the recognition thereof facilitates this realisation, and the horrifying effect of this supernatural tale is achieved. Yarn-spinning creates context for those who are unfamiliar with the legend. As it leads up to the actual supernatural apparition of the Dutchman, the moment of identification has the same effect for these readers.

This moment of recognition of identity is not omnipresent in the maritime supernatural narrative. In a minority of maritime supernatural narratives of the long nineteenth century, the horrifying effect of seeing the ghost comes, among other things, from not-knowing. Ghosts that resist identification are horrifying in a different way – William Hope Hodgson's ghostly beings in *The Ghost Pirates* are frightening because they cannot be recognised; they are 'shadders' –

shadows, that are nonetheless physically able to take over command of the ship.¹⁷ The emphasis of the apparition, however, is on the horror of not-knowing and the impossibility of identification; the focus does not move, as Smajic suggest, onto the ghost seer himself (Smajic, 1108). Instead of being horrified at the recognition of a particular ghost, it is the unrecognisable quality of this supernatural apparition that is horrifying.

Julia Briggs argues in *Night Visitors*, her seminal work on ghost stories in English literature, that ghost stories have a point to them; unlike first-hand accounts, which have ‘no discoverable meaning or application’, the patterning of ghost stories implies there must be a reason for supernatural events (Briggs, 15). ‘If a ghost walks’, Briggs says, ‘it is because its owner has not been buried with due ceremony, because he has to atone for some great sin, or perhaps to warn, or to provide information concealed during life [...] the behaviour of the traditional ghost resembles that of a restless sleeper whose bed is uncomfortable and who is troubled by guilt or an unfulfilled obligation’ (Briggs, 15–16). Nineteenth-century land-based ghosts haunt for a myriad of reasons, but for the maritime supernatural narrative, the reason for the return (or rather, prolonged stay), when given, is usually punishment for sins committed in life.

Cursed to sail the seas forever, after vowing he would undertake the dangerous journey around the Cape of Good Hope regardless of storms, his crew’s wishes or Sabbath, captain Vanderdecken is unable to die or return home. Vanderdecken’s life and those of his crew have been unnaturally extended as punishment. William Clark Russell, in his introduction to a 1906 edition of Marryat’s *The Phantom Ship*, notes how the Dutchman’s punishment is ‘specific. Its nature is definable, its area measurable’.¹⁸ It is moreover a punishment that speaks to a sailor audience, who ‘[grieve] to think of the endless labour to which the phantom crew are dedicated by the curse’ (Russell, ‘Introduction’, v). The specificity of the Dutchman’s punishment distinguishes

¹⁷ William Hope Hodgson, *The Ghost Pirates* 1909 (Rockville: Wildside Press, 2005), p. 18. Subsequent references are to this edition and are given in parentheses as (Hodgson, *Ghost Pirates*, page).

¹⁸ William Clark Russell, ‘Introduction’ to *The Phantom Ship* by Frederick Marryat (London: John Lane, The Bodley Head, 1906), v–xi; p. v. Subsequent references are to this edition and are given in parentheses as (Russell, ‘Introduction’, page).

him from land-based ghosts.

In his 1965 study into narratives of cursed wanderers, George Anderson argues that nineteenth-century literature often focused on the element of punishment and suffering, pointing out that the 'direst of punishments would necessarily be that which lasted the longest'.¹⁹ The Flying Dutchman is a wanderer, punished to roam around eternally for insulting the Christian God. Wandering is a type of haunting, but it tends to be undertaken by visceral ghosts rather than ephemeral ones. Anderson shows the myriad of tales similar to that of the Flying Dutchman. While they do not originate from the same source, striking similarities between Vanderdecken and, say, the Wandering Jew or even the Ancient Mariner, include blasphemy against a deity and cursed to wander eternally as punishment.²⁰

This punishment is usually 'to remove [the sinner] from the normality of mankind, usually to mark them apart from the society which they had flouted and to make them realise their predicament while realizing also that the conformists were prospering' (Anderson, 3). The Dutchman and his crew often cannot go on land, and communication with the ghostly vessel is often impossible. In *The Death Ship*, Vanderdecken laments that '[a]ll vessels but mine [...] catch the luck of the wind. [...] 'Tis bitter hard, these encounters of storms, when a few hours of fair wind would blow us round the Cape' (Russell, *Death Ship*, 110). Part of Vanderdecken's punishment is to see other ships successfully round the Cape, whereas the curse causes adverse weather to prevent his own attempts to return home.

The curse put on Vanderdecken is punishment for his immorality and irreligiousness, blasphemy 'or some other offense against a deity, notably for pride and presumption, personal arrogance directed against a god' (Anderson, 2). He will never go home, never manage to round the Cape and arrive in calmer waters. His punishment is to be stuck in a perpetual storm just off the Cape of Good Hope, unable to make any progress. In this sense, he is subject to a kind of

¹⁹ George K. Anderson, *The Legend of the Wandering Jew* (Providence: Brown University Press, 1965), p. 2.

²⁰ For (some of many) interpretations of the Ancient Mariner's punishment, see Harry White, 'Coleridge's Uncertain Agony' in *SEL Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* (2009) and Mark L. Barr, 'The Forms of Justice: Precedent and Gloss in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*' in *ELH* (2011).

imprisonment, a controlled and systematic type of punishment. He cannot leave his ship, which in turn cannot be steered away from a particular geographical area. Michel Foucault argues in *Discipline and Punish* (1975) that the body is always directly affected even when it is subjected to punishment that does not *harm* it.²¹ Punishment, intended to ‘correct, reclaim, “cure”’, which is not (or no longer) aimed at the body, must be aimed at the soul (Foucault, *Discipline*, 10). Foucault argues that ‘[t]he expiation that once rained down upon the body must be replaced by a punishment that acts in-depth on the heart, the thoughts, the will, the inclinations’ (Foucault, 16). At the same time, however, more often than not the body is ‘caught up in a system of constraints and privations, obligations and prohibitions’ (Foucault, *Discipline*, 11).

The punishment of the Flying Dutchman affects both his body as well as his soul; he is imprisoned in a body that cannot die, and his wish to return home is continuously denied. His agency as captain and seafarer is removed. His fate follows Foucault’s paradigm of modern punishment where the body and soul are restricted in voluntary behaviour. It is perhaps unsurprising that narratives set in the maritime space contain elements of punishment – the rigid hierarchy of top-down formal authority allows the use of physical punishment such as flogging (Rediker, *Deep Blue Sea*, 289). In Hodgson’s narratives, the sense of punishment is less ubiquitous but it is often implied. Importantly, Hodgson’s punishments are physical, affecting the body, and human. There is no divine punishment; Hodgson’s characters are punished by their peers. When body *and* soul are affected (e.g. in ‘The Voice in the Night’, where a strange fungus takes over the bodies of a shipwrecked man and his wife), the emphasis on the narrative is on the isolation of the ordeal as well as on the bodily horror. Although the horror of isolation is also a form of punishment, there is no implication that the man and his wife have done anything wrong. The randomness of their ordeal is a break from the systematic narrative course set by the curse.

The visceral nature of seafaring means the sailor’s body not only receives the punishment, but that it bears visible signs of the punishment inflicted on it. The supernatural actor of the

²¹ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (London: Penguin, 1991), p. 11.

maritime supernatural embodies their punishment and the horrifying effect of operating an undead body is used throughout not only as horror trope, but is also seized as a tool to comment on the actual bodies of seafarers and the effects of changes to the seafaring profession on how labouring bodies perform their work. It ties in with a nineteenth-century literary and political imagination full of ghostly workers. This will be further discussed in chapter five.

In her 2009 article on agency and the nineteenth-century spectre, Jennifer Bann argues that throughout the nineteenth century ghosts become progressively more able to actively influence events. Bann sees the late-nineteenth-century ghost as ‘active figures empowered rather than constrained by their deaths’, no longer ‘catalysts to another’s action’.²² She attributes this development to the mid-nineteenth-century rise of spiritualism. Bann’s ghosts are the spirits of those who have died – revenants who can only be seen by a select few. Bann suggests Marley, in Dickens’ *A Christmas Carol* as an example of a passive early-nineteenth-century ghost, which she contrasts with the ‘more-than-human characters of the later nineteenth century’ (Bann, 665). Ghosts in late-nineteenth-century fiction are ‘neither vulnerable nor victimized, as much in control of events as he is over his interactions with the narrator’ (Bann, 676). Ghosts threaten, manipulate, reveal information and even kill. Their presence leaves real, tangible traces in the world of the living.

Agency in the maritime supernatural narrative, on the other hand, is multifaceted and problematic. The supernatural actor is often unable to act out of their own volition. The action of the narrative goes on around them and they do not take active part in determining the narrative’s events. While the Dutchman’s appearance, along with his cursed ship and crew, guides the narrative into the realm of the supernatural, he himself does not determine the action of the plot. In this initial interpretation, Vanderdecken is a passive intruder that disturbs the spectator. He is not here to punish – the conditions of the curse render him unable to do so – but instead emerges to enact his own punishment. This inability to act is most clearly illustrated by the continued

²² Jennifer Bann, ‘Ghostly Hands and Ghostly Agency: The Changing Figure of the Nineteenth-Century Specter’, *Victorian Studies*, 51 (2009), 663–85; pp. 663–64.

impossibility to round the Cape of Good Hope and return home. Imogene, a living passenger on the Dutchman's ship in *The Death Ship* voices this exasperation: 'it is always next time – we shall pass the Cape and all will be well with us, that I am lost to wonder he could have ever so acted as to bring the curse of an eternal life of hopeless struggle upon him and his men' (Russell, *Death Ship*, 140).

Vanderdecken does not bear his curse alone. His ship is crewed by cursed men who intrude upon the space and imagination of a group of non-cursed, but otherwise similar labouring men. A possible reason for this is suggested in *The Death Ship*, where the curse is discussed in terms of degenerative disease: 'I have often asked myself that whilst watching them [...]. But then I have answered, why should innocent little children bear in their forms, and in their minds too, the diseases and infirmities caused by the wickedness and recklessness of persons, perhaps several generations removed from them? We dare not question – 'tis impious' (Russell, *Death Ship*, 141). Here, Russell refers to contemporary theories of degeneration which also emphasise lack of volition. It was believed, Stephan Karschay argues in his 2015 *Degeneration, Normativity and the Gothic at the Fin de Siècle*, that individuals who inherited degenerative qualities were 'largely absolved from social and moral responsibility'.²³ Moreover, it was argued that the process of degeneration began with 'a *conscious* decision on the part of the individual to start its insidious progress through the subsequent generations of the family' (Karschay, 61). In other words, it was thought that the 'entanglement of free will [...] and inexorable destiny' resulted in the moral and physical decline of subsequent generations (Karschay, 61).

Parallels can be drawn between these theories of degeneration and how the Dutchman's curse affects a community of men rather than the only one who committed the fateful sin. This is the case with the Wandering Jew, for instance, or the Ancient Mariner in Samuel Taylor Coleridge's 1797 poem. In the maritime supernatural, committing the sin, apparently out of free will, results in an eternal punishment for the sinner as well as those around him, preventing them from living

²³ Stephan Karschay, *Degeneration, Normativity and the Gothic at the Fin de Siècle* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), p. 60. Subsequent references are to this edition and are given in parentheses.

normal lives. The inheritors of moral sins of their forebears are predestined to become sinners too – they are committed to a way of life from which they are not at liberty to turn away.

Vanderdecken's crew is similar; the collective nature of life in the fore-castle fraternity means the entire crew is affected by the wrong-doings of their captain, preventing from acting in accordance with their own free will.

The curse does not affect all crew members in the same way, however. Some supernatural actors are able to retain agency. While Vanderdecken tends to be portrayed as more passive than violent, others are given the role of active antagonist within the limits of the curse. Characters lower in the hierarchy of shipboard power often retain the ability to actively influence events. In Marryat's *The Phantom Ship*, the cursed captain Vanderdecken is the epitome of a being without agency. Unable to relieve himself of his curse, he needs his son Philip to find a way to absolve him. However, the evil pilot Schriften, a former crew member of Vanderdecken sr. who has also fallen under the latter's curse, actively pursues Philip in order to prevent him from releasing his father from his curse. It is Schriften's intention to make Philip's (not-cursed) crew 'look upon [Philip] with feelings of ill-will' and to compel them into mutiny, knowing this will delay Philip's search for his cursed father.²⁴ Schriften's constant appearances are supernatural interruptions and present a real threat to the integrity and success of Philip's journey. The pilot 'appears to act from an impulse not his own' (Marryat, *Phantom Ship*, 248); while this implies there is a greater power controlling his agency, Schriften, crucially, *is* able to act. This is in sharp contrast to the cursed Vanderdecken, who, despite numerous sightings from afar, remains strangely marginalised.

The cursed first mate Van Vogelaar in *The Death Ship* is similarly able to act whereas Vanderdecken is not. Van Vogelaar repeatedly attempts to kill Geoffrey, presenting an actual and immediate threat to Geoffrey's well-being, unlike captain Vanderdecken, who, though menacing and frightening, is never of actual danger to Geoffrey. Like Schriften in *The Phantom Ship*, Van Vogelaar's agency seems mediated by another or a greater power. He undertakes his attempt to

²⁴ Frederick Marryat, *The Phantom Ship* (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1839), pp. 78–9. Subsequent references are to this edition and are given in parentheses as (Marryat, *Phantom Ship*, page).

murder Geoffrey in an episode of somnambulism. However, as Geoffrey aptly notes, '[w]hat he does in his sleep he may do awake. This *action* is like the whisper of a dreamer, babbling out his conscience. It is in his soul to kill me, and long thinking upon it has moved him to the deed in his sleep' (Russell, *Death Ship*, 388; emphasis added). The type of agency described here, facilitated by the curse, denotes action.

In conclusion, the maritime supernatural actor has an identity that particularly emerges from the moment of recognition. This moment is important, as it connects the narrative to an existing historiography that draws on maritime lore. Situating the supernatural actor in an existing paradigm tells the audience what to expect, even if it means this paradigm needs to be created in the text through yarn-spinning. Alternatively, the inability of identification has a similar horrifying effect. Punishment and wandering are strongly related to the existing legend as well as to the maritime environment, emphasised by the isolated nature of the supernatural actor's plight that involves their body and soul. The supernatural actor in the maritime supernatural is a remarkably passive ghost as the curse determines most of the narrative action. The idiosyncratic character of the maritime supernatural actor – he is a particular ghost in a particular place – allows for a discussion of labour as a form of ghostliness, a theme that will be returned to later. The maritime supernatural actor is different from land-based ghosts not only because it is a working sailor, but also because it plays with hierarchical relations in ways land-based ghosts do not. It is important, then, to consider the ship as a haunted and haunting space.

2.2 The haunted space

In the study of haunted spaces, the haunted house has been cited as being part of the 'quintessential "haunting experience"'; nothing embodies an encounter with the supernatural

more than stepping into a haunted house.²⁵ This statement shows a new take on haunted spaces is needed. Haunted experiences, after all, do not exclusively take place in houses on land. Samira Kawash, in her 2001 article on haunted spaces and racial politics in twentieth-century North American literature, makes an important distinction between ghost stories and stories of haunted houses. While ghost stories ‘explore psychological complexity and indeterminacy through encounters with ghostly presences’, in haunted house stories the danger is ‘signaled by “haunting” derives from the very structure of the house, not from some external element’.²⁶ In ghost stories, she further argues, banishment or exorcism can suffice to dispose of the ghost, whereas in haunted house stories, total destruction is often the only option (Kawash, 71). She distinguishes the ghost from its haunting locale, while simultaneously acknowledging that haunting can shift from the structure of the house to the revenant itself, in which case complete destruction of the house is avoided (Kawash, 72).

The ship is often seen as ‘structural equivalent’ of the (haunted) house, a place that is a sailor’s temporary replacement home in the maritime space (Kawash, 78). The term “haunted house”, which is used by Kawash throughout her argument, implies the house is a passive host to haunting. This implies the house is not necessarily actively involved in the supernatural events. Kawash’s argument, however, revolves around the notion that haunting originates in the house’s structure, and is therefore internal. The past participle “haunted” is confusing because it implies an external force at work; it suggests the house is passive, subjected to haunting. Perhaps a better word would be the present participle “haunting” – it denotes the ongoing, active haunting undertaken by the structure of the house.

The disruption brought into the house by the ghost is evident – the familiar, domestic sphere is intruded upon by an unfamiliar spectral entity. Similarly, when the house itself receives ghostly agency and becomes spectral, the familiar is replaced with the unfamiliar. The ship, however,

²⁵ Sylvia Ann Grider, ‘Haunted Houses’ in *Haunting Experiences: Ghosts in Contemporary Folklore* (Logan UT.: Utah State University Press, 2007), 143–70; p. 143.

²⁶ Samira Kawash, ‘Haunted Houses, Sinking Ships: Race, Architecture, and Identity in Beloved and Middle Passage’, *CR: The New Centennial Review*, 1 (2001), 67–86; p. 71.

despite Kawash's assertion that it is the house's 'structural equivalent', is not an incontestable or direct replacement for the house. It is certainly an inhabited space – necessarily so, considering the length of sea voyages. Indeed, Albert Cook suggestively argues in his study of cultural spaces that 'even the most uninviting constricted spaces may offer some of the comforts of body-centred security and stability'.²⁷ The sailor's body is sheltered by the minimal comfort of the ship. In this uninviting constricted space, he is provided with the necessities in order to keep body and soul together.

This does not, however, unquestionably make the merchant ship a domestic space.²⁸ The domestic, with its connotations of intimacy, familiarity and the sense of being 'at home', only marginally relate to the ship. Cook argues that '[u]se differentiates space, and use domesticates space' (Cook, 556). The ship is generally used to a productive purpose. A merchant ship, argues maritime historian Basil Greenhill, 'is built for one purpose only: to make money, to produce, like any other piece of machinery, a reasonable return on capital invested'.²⁹ Inhabitation is a necessary consequence of the nature of seafaring trade but a ship's purpose is not to provide domesticity. On account of its complicated domesticity, the nature of haunting in this space is necessarily different from land-based supernatural intrusion. The uncanny as a disruption of the familiar-turned-unfamiliar still applies, but gains new dimensions in the space of the ship. Following chapters will discuss this in more detail; first, it is necessary to further expand this thesis' understanding of the ship as a particular kind of space.

The ship has been characterised as the 'heterotopia *par excellence*', a space that is separate from society and which yet contains all of that society's other spaces (Foucault, 'Other Spaces', 27).

²⁷ Albert Cook, 'Space and Culture', *New Literary History*, 29 (1998), 551–72; p. 554.

²⁸ I am discounting passenger ships here, as the narratives in this thesis take place on working mercantile ships not primarily intended to carry passengers. Passenger ships would reach a level of relative comfort to accommodate their upper-class passengers, while many more unfortunate passengers would experience discomfort and illness during the voyage. For an example of the discomforts suffered by a Victorian second-class passenger, which included seasickness, inability to sleep, drenched bedding and stray rats in the cabins, see Greenhill, *Travelling by Sea in the Nineteenth Century* (1972), pp. 28–29.

²⁹ Basil Greenhill, 'Introduction' in *The Advent of Steam: The Merchant Ship before 1900* eds. Robert Gardiner and Basil Greenhill (London: Conway Maritime Press, 1993), pp. 7–9; p. 8.

Foucault's conceptualisation of the heterotopia has already been touched upon above. The ways in which the heterotopia addresses actual spatiality is useful here in helping me to specify the space that is the supernatural ship at sea. Interpreting the ship as a heterotopia makes it a metaphorical place, a closed space that is simultaneously 'linked with all the others' (Foucault, 'Other Spaces', 24). The ship, Foucault suggests,

is a floating piece of space, a place without a place, that exists by itself, that is closed in on itself and at the same time is given over to the infinity of the sea [...] the boat has not only been for our civilization [...] the great instrument of economic development [...] but has been simultaneously the greatest reserve of the imagination (Foucault, 'Other Spaces', 27).

It is tempting to follow Foucault's thinking, but I would like to make two suggestions here. Foucault says the heterotopia – the ship – metaphorically contains other societal spaces, but characterising the ship as highly metaphorical neglects the reality of the ship space. Maritime supernatural narratives emphasise the reality of being haunted at sea and it does so by factual descriptions of seafaring and maritime labour on ships. This is especially the case on the spectral ship, where an uncanny attempt at normalcy is performed until the realisation of the supernatural occurs. While the supernatural of these narratives can be metaphorical, speaking to contemporary anxieties 'which it renders obliquely, in displaced and often highly metaphorical guises, as monsters, mad men and ghosts', the ship herself remains a ship that needs to be manned, steered and captained.³⁰

Furthermore, although the ship is not the structural equivalent of the house, it remains an inhabited space. As a real, tangible space, or literary invocation of such a place, the ship in the narratives at stake in this thesis is not a metaphorised, all-encompassing space where social contradictions are erased. As it is inhabited by humans, it is disturbed by the supernatural. Foucault's heterotopia remains undisturbed, however; Foucault's definition implies that 'whatever happens in such spaces of "Otherness" is of interest, and even in some sense "acceptable" or

³⁰ Darryl Jones, 'Introduction' to *Horror Stories: Classic Tales from Hoffmann to Hodgson* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), xi–xxv; p. xi.

“appropriate”³¹. I suggest that the disruption of the ship, this floating inhabited space, is significant because it removes the small amount of domesticity it contains. Yet in Foucault’s interpretation, the heterotopia is not a problematic space of disruption or violence, a suggestion that is neither realistic nor very useful for interpreting the space that is the ship.

While the ship can become familiar – the very division between green hands and seasoned salts denotes a ‘familiarity with an attitude of subordinate difference’ – it does not and cannot become intimate or homely (Steinberg, 36). It is not a home away from home because the term “home” implies fixity, belonging and comfort. As suggested in chapter one, the ship is naturally an uncanny space; never in the same geographical space, the ship is unstable and uncomfortable. The threats that are posed by ‘the legally endorsed supreme authority of the captain’ show the uncomfortable and alien divide that is present on board ship (Creighton, 544). As a place where labour is performed, and inhabitation is secondary, judged by the average size of sailor quarters compared to hold space for goods, the ship is a complicated space for the supernatural to occur. The disruption caused by the supernatural interrupts work as well as leisure. The disruption can also be caused by the ship itself, however; when a spectral ship appears, the nature of her haunting is different from a spectre intruding onto a natural ship.

The ship as a haunted space, intruded upon by an external force that is both familiar and unfamiliar, occurs often in maritime fiction. It is a natural ship beset by the supernatural. The haunting tends to be metaphorical; rather than real ghosts, what haunts these ships are oppression or memories. Alternatively, the supernatural materialises in the form of maritime animals that become monstrous or representative of punishment. A ship presented as a haunted space appears in Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (1797). The Mariner’s ship that is itself not spectral but instead is plagued by external forces that influence the day to day activities on the ship. After the Mariner shoots the albatross, the ship is becalmed. Rendered motionless due to lack of wind and unable to move, there is nothing to do for the ship and her crew but to wait in

³¹ David Harvey, *Spaces of Hope* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), p. 185.

this 'silence of the sea'.³² There is no doubt among the crew that this is punishment for the shooting of the albatross. The 1815 marginal gloss explicates that their punishment is inflicted upon them by '[a] Spirit [that] had followed them; one of the invisible inhabitants of this planet, neither departed souls nor angels [...] They are very numerous, and there is no climate or element without one or more' (Coleridge, 9). These spirits are everywhere, and the maritime space shows its inherent supernaturalness through their appearance.

Though metaphorical spirits pervade the poem, the haunting also has a physical effect. The ship is haunted by inactivity; 'Day after day, day after day | We stuck, nor breath nor motion' (Coleridge, 8). Shipboard labour is no longer performed in the quiet sea. While it does not render the ship itself spectral, there is an undeniable sense of the supernatural that surrounds this motionless vessel. The supernatural is evoked by the unnatural weather conditions and the spectral 'slimy things' that 'crawl with legs | Upon the slimy sea' (Coleridge, 9). The sea water, 'like a witch's oils | Burnt green, and blue and white', and suggests the supernatural is contained within it (Coleridge, 9). It is as if the maritime environment prepares the becalmed ship for the imminent apparition of Life-in-Death's ship. The Mariner's ship and crew undergo the intrusion of unnatural elements passively and the ship becomes a site for haunting through the unnatural inactivity – unnatural because the ship is supposed to be a site of constant labour. It makes the ship an uncanny space open to invasion from the outside. The maritime world in which she resides threatens to overtake her; nature becomes a threat.

Ahab's *Pequod* in Herman Melville's 1851 *Moby-Dick* is another influential haunted ship in a very metaphorical sense. It is nearly impossible to do justice to the countless interpretations of this novel and the role of the *Pequod*, but a few of these interpretations will be mentioned here to clarify the notion of the haunted ship. The multifaceted nature of *Moby-Dick* allows the whale ship *Pequod* to take on different guises; seen as 'the ship as society, as world-in-itself, or as microcosm',

³² Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner and Other Poems* 1798 and 1815 (New York: Dover Publications, 1992), p. 8. Subsequent references are to this edition and are given in parentheses.

she is visited by ghosts as well as acting like a ghost herself.³³ Young notes how the *Albatross*, the first ship the *Pequod* meets, is uncannily spectral; seemingly unaware of the *Pequod*'s hails, the *Albatross*' men are silent and smiling, and their inability to communicate makes the meeting ominous and spectral (Young, 449–50). The discourse here is suggestive of the supernatural,

The *Pequod* herself also takes on the characteristics of a haunted ship. As pointed out by Gesa Mackenthun, she becomes spectral once the Cape of Good Hope is reached (Mackenthun, 145). Melville chose this location well; not only is the Cape an area notoriously difficult to navigate, it is moreover traditionally the locale of the Flying Dutchman's haunting. In the enigmatic chapter 'The Spirit Spout', the whale-ship *Pequod* is plagued by 'inscrutable sea-ravens' or cormorants, perching on the lines and yard arms 'as though they deemed our ship some drifting, uninhabited craft; a thing appointed to desolation'.³⁴ The ship is *described as* an abandoned vessel haunted by the whale spout, the promise of revenge and the elusiveness of the whale. Ultimately, however, it remains a natural ship. Melville's description causes the haunting; there is no actual supernatural entity that causes an uncomfortable sense of presence. The haunting emerges from simile, not from an actual ghost.

These famous literary examples make it clear that the haunted ship itself, while besieged by unnatural or supernatural events or sensations, is usually not unnatural. It is a space of labour that suffers from an uncanny intrusion of a familiar event or memory. Importantly, the experience of this intrusion is communal. Instead of affecting a single person of the crew, the crew as a whole suffers under the unnatural circumstances in which they find themselves. These examples of ships as haunted spaces show the generally metaphorical nature of the ghost; in maritime literature of the nineteenth century, there seems to be little space for actual spectres to intrude the ship. Hodgson, in the early-twentieth century, returns to Coleridge's eternal spirits haunting the maritime space, intruding upon the ship and her crew and leaving a tangible reminder of their presence.

³³ James Dean Young, 'The Nine Gams of the *Pequod*', *American Literature*, 25 (1954), 449–63; p. 449.

³⁴ Herman Melville, *Moby-Dick* 1851 (London: Penguin Books, 1994), p. 232.

The numerous ships that sight the Flying Dutchman's vessel and suffer shipwreck as a result are haunted ships. It has already been argued that appearances of ghosts can test the captains' and crews' suitability in their roles. No matter the way in which the spectral ship appears, she leaves behind death and destruction. The haunted ships intruded upon by this external force are destroyed by this spectre. The multitude of the Dutchman's appearances makes the ship that she haunts seem interchangeable. The haunted ship is there to be haunted. In this sense, they denote the same sense of passivity and inactivity as the Ancient Mariner's ship or the *Pequod* in a surprisingly subtle way. They undergo haunting without resistance, which leads to their inevitable end, to be replaced by another earthly vessel awaiting the same fate. The ship as a space that haunts is the intrusion that is familiar and yet unfamiliar. It is the active element in the encounter between past and present, unnatural and spectral in its appearance.

The ship that haunts, unlike the haunted ship, can never be a real, natural ship. It has the function of a ghost, yet, like the maritime supernatural actor, retains its identity as a ship of a particular time and nationality. There are several characteristics that resurface in maritime supernatural literature regarding the ship that haunts. The ship is unseaworthy, built of worm-eaten wood and with tattered sails, yet it still sails without problems. It has the unnatural ability to stay afloat regardless of the weather and often sails of its own accord. The Flying Dutchman's ship is 'governed by a restricting series of rituals and structures, often regarding freedom of movement' (Jones, *Horror*, 72). The Dutchman is unable to leave his ship, often sending other sailors in boats to other ships delivering cursed letters, and importantly, is unable to round the Cape of Good Hope and return to the Netherlands.

The structured attempts to sail past this treacherous meeting point of the Atlantic and the Indian Oceans consistently fail. At the same time, some versions of the legend have the Flying Dutchman appear anywhere on the globe. Marryat's Vanderdecken appears to his son Philip on every voyage regardless of the latter's global position or destination. Despite his apparent ubiquity, however, the Dutchman does not stand out for speed as much as he does for his ship's unnatural sailing ability. This spectral ship appears to sail calmly in storms, or seems to battle heavy winds in

calm weather. She is witnessed to sail through shallow passages that force natural ships to run aground (Marryat, *Phantom Ship*, 161). It is telling that Vanderdecken and his ship are often both referred to as the Flying Dutchman. The captain and his ship perform similar functions in the narrative, but also retain the natural relationship between captain and ship. They do not physically merge. The Dutchman's ship, although she acts as ghost, is still in need of being crewed, yet her very ghostliness impacts the nature of the labour. This section will consider the most important characteristics of the haunting ship.

There is no textual evidence for cultural historian Agnes Andeweg's claim that the Dutchman's 'legendary speed' is the key feature of the yarn.³⁵ She reads the Dutchman as a 'symbol of speed' in her article on the possible origins and manifestations of the Flying Dutchman (Andeweg, 'Manifestations', 193). Andeweg partially bases her interpretation of the Dutchman as representative of technological advancement on the allegedly legendary speed of the vessel. She uses this legendary speed to link the Dutchman with the contemporary appropriation of the legend in Dutch culture, where the epithet "Flying Dutchman" is used to celebrate sportsmen, aeroplanes and locomotives.

It is my contention that the emphasis here should be on the unnaturalness of the Dutchman's movement, not the speed at which he moves. The point of the legend is that he is unable to progress, hence there is no speed to consider. Marryat's Dutchman has apparent freedom of movement, yet his forced appearances all over the globe do not allow him to return home. Being forced to go to evidently dangerous places does not evidence free mobility. The inability to move at all, as is the case for Russell's Vanderdecken, further dispels Andeweg's claim that the Flying Dutchman sails at legendary speed. The Flying Dutchmen in the narratives discussed in this thesis do not ever actually fly. The spectral ship never leaves the water. It should be noted that the verb 'to fly' has two meanings that are particular to the nautical profession cited in the

³⁵ Agnes Andeweg, 'Manifestations of the Flying Dutchman: On Materializing Ghosts and (Not) Remembering the Colonial Past', *Cultural History*, 4 (2015), 187–205; p. 193. Subsequent references are to this edition and are given in parentheses as (Andeweg, 'Manifestations', page).

OED: 'Of the wind: To shift or veer suddenly. [...] Of a ship, her head: *to fly to, up in, into the wind*' and 'To allow (a sail or sheet) to fly loose; rarely to set (a sail), to carry, hoist (colours)'.³⁶ Rather than suggest flying in the nautical sense refers to extraordinary speed, these definitions imply that 'flying' in the nautical sense refers to unseamanlike and irresponsible behaviour. Craig Martin argues, in his 2011 article on free movement and forced migration, that 'the most critical factor in the debates on the mobilities of various individuals [is] the *choice* of when to move, the ability to do so, and the specific mobility networks that are utilised. Choice, as the supposed freedom of liberal capitalism, suggests the affordance of the right to move at will'.³⁷ The Dutchman's lack of free will means he has no access to free movement, let alone speed. He cannot afford to move as he pleases, because his movements are determined by the curse.

There is no textual evidence the Dutchman moves quickly. Instead, what is unnatural in the Dutchman's appearances, is the ability to sail regardless of (or even contrary to) the weather; the spectral ship sails easily in storms, but appears to battle high winds when the seas are calm. The Dutchman's inability to move past the Cape of Good Hope or Hodgson's often becalmed ships are unable to use the normal mobility networks. There is something unnatural about their ability to move at all. The rituals undertaken by the Dutchman and his crew to gain access to free mobility – tried and tested seafaring methods to make the weather work in one's favour rather than against it – fail consistently, resulting in (or the consequence of) pointless seafaring labour. This pointlessness suggests a Marxist notion of exploitative labour, often embodied by ghostly labourers, pervades maritime supernatural narratives. The spectral ship, filled with ghostly workers, is subjected to the whims of a higher power. Writing about the cursed sailors' lack of productivity becomes a protest against removal of labourers' agency due to industrialisation of the seafaring profession. As will be discussed in chapter five, Russell in particular uses the Dutchman legend to engage with concerns with the changing nature of seafaring labour.

³⁶ 'fly, v.1.' *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, December 2016. Web. 6 January 2017.

³⁷ Craig Martin, 'Desperate passage: violent mobilities and the politics of discomfort', *Journal of Transport Geography*, 19 (2011), 1046–52; p. 1047.

In *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, the appearance of the spectral ship of Life-in-Death is unmistakably supernatural, with ‘her ribs through which the Sun | Did peer, as through a grate’ (Coleridge, 11). Any natural vessel, damaged to the extent that it consists of nothing more than a skeletal framework, would be unfit for sailing. This spectral ship however, is able to stay afloat because of some strange, supernatural power. It moves independently; unaffected by the lack of wind, this ship manages to arrive next to the Mariner’s vessel without apparent difficulty.

In Edgar Allan Poe’s ‘MS Found in a Bottle’ (1833), the unnamed narrator finds himself shipwrecked off the coast of Australia when he suddenly becomes aware that ‘[a]t a terrific height above us, and upon the very verge of the precipitous descent, hovered a gigantic ship of, perhaps, four thousand tons’.³⁸ Not only is this ship significantly larger than the average nineteenth-century vessel, her unnatural ability is hinted at by describing this enormous ship as hovering upon an enormous wave.³⁹ The narrator continues: ‘what mainly inspired us with horror and astonishment, was that she bore up under a press of sail in the very teeth of that supernatural sea, and of that ungovernable hurricane’ (Poe, 104). The ship is sailing directly into the storm with all her sails unfurled, risking the loss of manoeuvrability and damaging the canvass. No ordinary ship would undertake such a move in these conditions – but this is no ordinary ship.

Much like the spectral ship in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, Poe’s ship has the unnatural ability to sail undeterred in any weather and moreover, appears to be constructed out of unseaworthy material. The narrator of ‘MS Found in a Bottle’ notes the ‘peculiar character about the wood which strikes me as rendering it unfit for the purpose to which it has been applied. I mean its extreme *porousness*, considered independently of the worm-eaten condition which is a consequence of navigation in these seas, and apart from the rottenness attendant upon age’ (Poe, 106). The ship is made of worm-eaten, aged wood, making her barely seaworthy.

³⁸ Edgar Allan Poe, ‘MS Found in a Bottle’ 1833 in *Selected Writings by Edgar Allan Poe* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1967), 99–109, p. 103.

³⁹ Douglass C. North has shown that in the 1830s, the majority of ships had a tonnage between 100 and 419, whereas by the 1860s the majority carried between 420 and 1199 tonnes. By the 1860s, a mere 0.3% of ships carried over 3,999 tonnes (Douglass C. North. ‘Sources of Productivity Change in Ocean Shipping, 1600–1850’, *Journal of Political Economy*, 76 (1968), 953–70; p. 958.

This is a common characteristic of spectral ships. Geoffrey in *The Death Ship* notes that the ghostly ship ‘has a very solid look – she is a real ship, but the like of her I have never seen, save in old prints [...] I do not understand it. The wood that yields such [phosphorescent] light must be rotten as tinder and porous as a sponge. It could not swim’ (Russell, 76). The spectral ship’s age is confirmed by a carpenter, who confirms the ship’s age by pointing out characteristics of her build, and his authority gives rise to Geoffrey’s confusion. He is disturbed by the facts he is told and the spectacle he sees in front of him. Importantly, without the experiential authority of the carpenter, it is unlikely Geoffrey would have picked up on the unnatural age of this spectre, showing how seafaring experience is used to legitimate claims of the maritime supernatural.

The spectre ship in *The Phantom Ship* could conversely almost pass for any ordinary ship were it not for the assertions made by an authoritative person about the nature of the ship. When the cursed Dutchman’s vessel appears for the first time, the crew of Philip’s own ship see and hear the phantom ship’s creaking, the men on board, the waves it makes – and then it disappears (Marryat, *Phantom Ship*, 76). Philip then feels a hand upon his shoulder, and ‘cold darted through his whole frame’; it is the uncanny pilot Schriften, who yells ‘Philip Vanderdecken – that’s the *Flying Dutchman*!’ (Marryat, *Phantom Ship*, 76). The preceding paragraphs show that, ‘although it was a perfect calm, [the spectral ship] was to all appearance buffeting in a violent gale, plunging and lifting over a surface that was as smooth as glass, now careening to her bearing, then recovering herself’ (Marryat, *Phantom Ship*, 76). In naming the Flying Dutchman, Schriften relates this apparition to an existing body of maritime lore, and it is a scene often chosen by nineteenth-century publishers to include in the illustrations, if not as the primary illustration opposite the novel’s title page.

In Poe’s ‘MS Found in a Bottle’, the large, unnatural ship is boarded by the narrator. She is crewed by ancient men, who ‘paid me no manner of attention, and although I stood in the very midst of them all, seemed utterly unconscious of my presence’ (Poe, 107). The narrator-protagonist takes on the role of a ghost and haunts the ship. However, and crucially, he does not, in the strictest sense, *haunt*. He comes close to adhering completely to Wolfreys’ definition of

haunting: 'unseen forces that make themselves felt in everyday life' (Wolfreys, 5). He remains unseen, but fails to make himself known to the crew. The spectres are unaffected by his presence. The haunting is one-sided; the narrator experiences haunting as a ghost but the true spectres, his victims, do not experience being haunted. This is not the kind of double-haunting that is created in *The Death Ship*, where direct interactions between cursed beings and non-cursed beings in combination with the curse reversal complicate the traditional parameters of haunting. Geoffrey is clearly marked as other – primarily as a foreigner to the Dutchmen, but also and perhaps more importantly as bearer of ill luck.

The spectral ship, then, bears unmistakable signs of the supernatural, intruding as a whole upon the spectator. The overlap between ship-that-haunts and ship-that-is-haunted occurs when the spectral ship – as a tangible space, not a symbolic expression of haunting – is itself intruded upon. It turns the parameters of the supernatural around, and suggests the living passengers of the spectral ship should be read in ghostly terms themselves. This duality points towards instability of narrative agency of the protagonist, whose role of the superior British seafarer becomes ambiguous.

This section has considered the ship as the haunting locale. It is clear that the multifaceted nature of the maritime genre complicates a straightforward transposition of the qualities of the haunted house onto the ship. The ship as a whole intrudes but, in some cases, is also intruded upon. The supernatural ship otherwise can be roughly divided into two groups; the haunted ship and the ship that haunts. The haunted ship is itself not supernatural; it is completely seaworthy and it is where the living reside and ghosts visit. The haunting ship, on the other hand, does not look seaworthy but has the unnatural ability not only to stay afloat but to move through any kind of weather. It is the abode of ghostly spectres and supernatural actors; occasionally, the living visit and turn spectral themselves. Haunting occurs from the very structure and material of the ship. However, the invasion of the living upon the spectral presents the living as the unfamiliar-yet-familiar other, intruding upon the supposedly natural ship. They make their presence felt through interactions with the Dutchmen, and thus take part in an inverted type of haunting. This makes the

ship that haunts on this occasion simultaneously a haunted ship. The multifaceted nature of this haunting locale is found in a unique environment which further sets apart the maritime genre, and indeed gives the genre part of its name. Compared with the haunted house, the supernatural ship is unfixed in a place that itself is unnatural and unpredictable: the sea.

2.3 The haunting environment

In discussions of haunted spatialities, the sea is rarely mentioned. In certain land-based haunted narratives, nature plays an important supernatural role: Emily Brontë's moors in *Wuthering Heights* actively contribute to the narrative's haunting quality rather than act as a mere backdrop against which seemingly supernatural events occur.⁴⁰ A substantial amount of work on haunting urban spaces exists; Charles Dickens' London and Robert Louis Stevenson's Soho and Cavendish Square in *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1882) are prime examples of environments that act as almost-living, participating forces in seemingly supernatural events.⁴¹ Conversely, in studies of the maritime space itself, it is often noted that the sea has an apparently inherent propensity toward the supernatural, but again, this has not been studied in-depth in relation to literature. Perceptions of the sea have been seen changing 'from being a space of mysterious danger to being a space without nature, unpossessible but also unremarkable' (Steinberg, 105). In passing, the enigmatic qualities of the maritime space are mentioned but these are not Steinberg's main concern.

In the maritime supernatural genre, the sea is more than a situational background against which the narrative's events play out. It is key to the singularity of the genre because, aside from

⁴⁰ Rachel Trickett, "'Wuthering Heights': The story of a Haunting', *Bronte Society Transactions*, 16 (1975), 338–49; p. 342.

See also Cameron Dodworth, 'The Mystery of the Moors: Purgatory and the Absence/Presence of Evil in *Wuthering Heights*' in *Brontë Studies* (2012); Thomas Kullman, 'Nature and Psychology in *Melmoth the Wanderer* and *Wuthering Heights*' in *Exhibited by Candlelight: Sources and Developments in the Gothic Tradition* (1995), pp. 99–106.

⁴¹ See Walter Dexter, *The London of Dickens* (1924), Judith R. Walkowitz, 'Going Public: Shopping, Street Harassment, and Streetwalking in Late Victorian London' in *Representations* (1998); Stephan Karschay, *Degeneration, Normativity and the Gothic at the Fin de Siecle* (2015).

determining its setting, without exception the sea plays an integral part of the haunting. Land-based ghosts, effective in their haunting because of their identities or localities, do not tend to rely on their wider environment for spectral effect or impact. John Mack has argued that 'whilst the relationship to the land is essential to the habitation of the sea, being at sea is not simply a version of being on land'.⁴² This statement fully applies here. Being at sea suggests 'infinity and solitude' different from spectral experiences on land (Foulke, *Narrative*, 9). The isolation of maritime life increases the supernatural sensibilities of those at sea; becalmed ships are often said to be under a kind of spell, despite the fact that events like becalming is entirely natural phenomena (Foulke, *Narrative*, 12). The maritime space consistently plays an active role in the maritime supernatural. While in most land-based haunted narratives, where the action of the narrative does not necessarily rely on interactions with the natural environment, the maritime supernatural genre thrives on the interaction between men, ships *and* the sea.

The maritime space collaborates with the curse; when the Dutchman is sighted by any natural ship, the latter will unfailingly meet with disaster in the form of shipwreck or a freak storm. In *The Phantom Ship*, the different encounters with the Flying Dutchman result in inevitable shipwreck of the haunted ship. Whether the cause is unexpected shallows that cause ships to run aground, becalming where the ship is unable to move any which way or death from exposure on rafts, in all cases the sea plays an active role in claiming victims. At the end of *The Death Ship*, it transpires that all ships that encountered the phantom ship over the course of the narrative have met with shipwreck and are never heard of again. The sea is menacing and seems to have a mind of its own, yet its agency can yield to accommodate the narrative set by the Dutchman's curse. In Hodgson's fiction, sea monsters and other horrors originate inexplicably from the sea, returning to the deep once their horrible mission is complete, leaving individuals shipwrecked by themselves.

All across history, mariners have 'shared a conceptual recognition that the oceans' waters united rather than divided people'.⁴³ Yet, it is a dual space of haunting and being haunted, activity

⁴² John Mack, *The Sea: A Cultural History* (London: Reaktion Books, 2011), p. 14.

⁴³ Rainer F. Buschmann, *Oceans in World History* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2007), p. xiii.

and passivity: 'On the one hand there is awe, the fear of the unknown and the unpredictable, and the possibility of harnessing its destructive powers. On the other hand there is the challenge, adventure, creativity, imagination and romance; the sea as a vital element of life, a source of food and energy, a bridge between distant people and cultures'.⁴⁴ This open space 'bears a further double face: it can be hostile or strange, but it can also be expansive' (Cook, 554). It may have brought sailors together in the forecastle fraternity (who were forced into this brotherhood by the confined and hierarchical nature of the ship) and forged relationships between nations (oppressive or not), but the maritime world was and still is an alien and alienating space. While at sea, sailors were not considered 'as being *of* society' (Steinberg, 50). The sea is inescapable once one has boarded a ship and set sail, and though not confining or enclosing the spectator with walls or fences, it is inescapable.

The sea is not only divisive. It unites sailors in an environment that has to be contented with. The sea has a mind of its own, a consciousness that is uncanny because it does not belong to this apparently inanimate environment: 'The idea that men drown because the water takes them of its own conscious will is very ancient and very widespread'.⁴⁵ It is surprising then, that this space of inherent doubles and intrusion has not been talked about as a space that haunts. In order to create a discourse that accurately describes literary imaginations of this clearly haunted (and haunting) space, it will be helpful to consider W.H. Auden's *The Enchafèd Flood*, a study into the imagination of the sea and the desert.

Both the sea and the desert are considered 'the wilderness', without apparent community, law or historical change.⁴⁶ Auden begins his study by considering the use of the sea in the Bible. Here, the sea emerges as '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

⁴⁴ Elisha Linder. 'Human Apprehension of the Sea' in *The Sea and History* ed. E.E. Rice (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 1996), 15–22; p. 15.

⁴⁵ Christina Hole, 'Superstitions and Beliefs of the Sea', *Folklore*, 78 (1967), 184–89; p. 188.

⁴⁶ W. H. Auden, *The Enchafèd Flood, or The Romantic Iconography of the Sea* (New York: Random House, 1950), p. 16.

relapse' (Auden, 8). Moreover, the sea is not a space where man goes voluntarily; Auden quotes the Old English poem 'The Seafarer', where it is evident that the sea 'is no place to be if you can help it, and to try to cross it betrays a rashness bordering on hubris, at which a man's friends should be properly concerned' (Auden, 10). Over time, man tames the sea; in Shakespeare's plays, Auden notices a change from the sea described as purely negative to a place of 'purgatorial suffering' through which a world of music and marriage becomes possible (Auden, 12). The sea is cleansing and reviving.

María del Pilar Blanco has discussed desert haunting in *Ghost Watching American Modernity* (2012), who argues that in this 'spatial tabula rasa', haunting becomes a 'dimension of regeneration'.⁴⁷ The desert is a place of rebirth, haunted by nothingness *and* by what has been there before, by former versions of the self, since it is a place of exile, punishment and eventual atonement. According to Pilar Blanco, 'the Judeo-Christian myth of the ascetic life has taken hold of how we perceive the emptiness and psychological impact of wandering into these spaces of ascribed nothingness' (Pilar Blanco, 61). In other words, we perceive empty spaces in a context of religious self-discipline, and we expect to undergo a religious experience when we enter these empty spaces.

The Romantic attitude towards the sea that Auden studies, has four distinctive elements that relate to the perceptions of this space in preceding centuries. Firstly, to leave the land and city is now desirable for every sensible and honourable man. Whereas 'The Seafarer' argues against the danger and arrogance of undertaking a sea voyage, by the Romantic period it has become an honourable aim. Secondly, Auden argues that now, the sea 'is the real situation and the voyage is the true condition of man' (Auden, 13). In the Romantic period, the sea is no longer a barbaric place that is outside normal space; instead, it embodies the true experience of human life. Thirdly, and as a consequence, the shore life has become trivial. The sea 'is where decisive events, the moments of eternal choice, of temptation, fall, and redemption occur' (Auden, 14). Fourthly, then,

⁴⁷ María del Pilar Blanco, *Ghost Watching American Modernity* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2012), p. 61; 67.

the destination has become completely irrelevant, unknown or non-existent.

Auden's sea, inherently void of humanity and community in Romantic literature, is repopulated in nineteenth-century maritime fiction, where ships traverse the oceans crewed by a community of labouring men. If the sea is considered as a space of nothingness, a blank space between places, it is implied that 'the sea itself, as a formless surface across which ships sail, is beyond territorial control' (Steinberg, 14). Steinberg points out that this is not realistic, because ocean space and access to its resources is regulated in both contemporary and historical law. It is not an empty space but instead filled with trade, labour and violence. It is not only a place of quiet self-reflection and self-discipline. Discipline and punishment are undergone, not self-inflicted, in the fore-castle fraternity. Even Ishmael in *Moby-Dick*, who goes to sea as a way 'of driving off the spleen, and regulating the circulation', finds himself doing physical labour between his philosophical musings (Melville, 21; Blum, 3). Reflection and labour merge in seafaring work.

Moreover, the way Auden describes this landscape makes it the ultimate sublime space. Auden's sea is empty and oppressive, yet regenerating and absolving. The sublime, argues Christopher Hitt, is envisioned by both Edmund Burke and Immanuel Kant as 'a disorienting or overwhelming confrontation with a natural object. It is this version of the sublime, involving a dialectic between self and nature, which is most visible in the Romantic sublime'.⁴⁸ One key element of the sublime, in Hitt's view, is the contradicting tendency to include '*both* humbling fear *and* ennobling validation for the perceiving subject' (Hitt, 606). In other words, experiencing the sublime should result in a simultaneous sense of fear as well as awe at confronting an overwhelming natural phenomenon.

In most maritime supernatural narratives studied in this thesis, the sublime ocean space denotes a complicated and confusing relationship with time and space. It is a place of solitude and isolation, which gives rise to horror. At the same time, the sea forces sailors to associate with a group of other men who are, at times, disinclined to absorb all of those on board in the fore-castle

⁴⁸ Christopher Hitt, 'Toward an Ecological Sublime', *New Literary History*, 30 (1999), 603–19; p. 605.

fraternity. The inevitability of the other in the maritime space is as horrifying as finding oneself alone on a raft or frozen island. As will be discussed, there is something particularly horrifying in the realisation that the ocean carries the ghostly ship or maritime ghost closer to the natural ship. The experience of the sea is collective. As Marcus Rediker argues, '[t]he deep-sea sailor labored on a frail vessel surrounded by omnipotent forces of nature, and this situation imparted a special urgency to cooperative labor' (Rediker, 94). Nature is overpowering, both when it is wild, out of control and dangerous and when it is still, quiet and unmoving; it was little 'doubted that death stalked [the] seas, lurking behind every wave' (Rouleau, 51). The seafarer's world is one where 'nature provide[s] the answers to its own questions in a series of omens, signs, and symbols' (Rouleau, 35). Supernatural occurrences then become part of a natural system, and are *expected* to occur during a voyage.

Through sustained experience, dwellers in these spaces are able to recognise patterns and prepare themselves in a way that minimises intrusion and disturbance by the natural force. This is one of the practical applications of yarn-spinning; by sharing experiences, all hands are able to recognise patterns and prepare themselves accordingly. In the maritime supernatural genre, this predictability is present in a different way: signs and omens that announce a supernatural arrival rarely fail to be correct. Although the exact manner of apparition remains unclear until it is too late, the sailors as well as the reader is aware something is about to happen. The perspective from the ghost ship itself is different. The curse manifests itself in storms that should sink any earthly craft, but the Dutchman's ship manages to escape unscathed time and again. Part of the punishment is to suffer through these storms repeatedly. It is not, as Andeweg argues, because of the superior speed of the ghostly ship that she survives (Andeweg, *Vliegende Hollander*, 21). There is no evidence that the Dutchman and his ship escape storms and destruction because they outrun the sea. The ship does not have more agency than the sea; both are ruled by the curse.

Pilar Blanco considers the frontier as a locale for haunting. Ghosts, Pilar Blanco asserts, 'need to be read in their specificity. They are embedded in the story about a place' (Pilar Blanco, 8). This is a contrastive view from Smajic's idea that ghosts are timeless, merely shifting their appearance

enough to fit in at the time they appear. Returning to the ghosts' identity, then, what moreover constitutes a particular kind of haunting is its environment. 'Stories and tales', say Michael Parker Pearson and Colin Richards in their 1994 *Approaches to Social Space*, 'may be attached to such places, making them resonate with history and experience. The culturally constructed elements of a landscape are thus transformed into material and permanent markers and authentications of history, experience and values. Although the stories change in the retelling, the place provides an anchor of stability and credibility'.⁴⁹ The frontier, however, as borderland that lacks stability, is not a constant and unmoving space.

While the frontier denotes a specific place – a borderland between the civilised and the wilderness – the location of this space is 'constantly shifting' (Pilar Blanco, 5). The frontier space is haunted by versions of its previous self as well as 'the anomaly of someone who stays behind and does not move with the current of that larger narrative of expansion' (Pilar Blanco, 3). The sea is also a constantly changing place. The Flying Dutchman is the one who stays behind; stuck in time, he still has archaic characteristics and is not modern. The Flying Dutchman's story is of a particular place (often the Cape of Good Hope) but he appears everywhere. Contrastively, Hodgson's sea stories are often set in unnamed maritime environments described as borderlands. The relevance of place for the maritime supernatural genre is removed; the absence of a particular space in Hodgson's work emphasises the strange other dimensions in which his tales take place. It is this sense of unmooring that makes Hodgson's oceans sublime, horrifying and strangely beautiful.

2.4 The maritime supernatural

Defining a genre is an ambitious task. The maritime supernatural genre might be limited in size, its contribution to knowledge of the literary sea is nevertheless important. Uniting these nineteenth-

⁴⁹ Michael Parker Pearson and Colin Richards, *Architecture and Order: Approaches to Social Space* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 4.

century supernatural narratives by sailor-authors under a common denominator suggests they are 'joined by a way of viewing the world' (Cohen, 'Traveling Genres', 482). They engage with the literary and real worlds to contribute to an understanding of ways of representation: like literary realism, the value of the maritime supernatural 'does not reside in the kind of life it presents, but in the way it presents it'.⁵⁰ Cohen has suggested that '[g]eneric features of a text are features that extend beyond the text, that are recognized by readers and appropriated by authors. If genres appeal to an audience, so the materialist view runs, it must be because they can do something for this audience, that they offer a compelling solution to some of the unresolved question that structure its horizons' (Cohen, 'Traveling Genres', 482). This thesis partakes in the materialist approach outlined by Cohen here, but with the condition that the supernatural in the maritime space, though it structures the narrative, does not necessarily suggest solutions to the societal problems it signals.

This chapter has revealed the framework of a genre. Ideas of genre take meaning through the exercise of writing and reading. As such, the following chapters are aimed at filling in the framework set out here. The maritime supernatural is the literary expression of the spectral at sea. It is an integral part of the narrative reality; the maritime supernatural is '*hegemonic* – i.e., so central and significant that it determines the whole narrative logic'.⁵¹ This means the maritime supernatural narrative is determined by supernatural logic that is different from the author's reality, yet receives credibility through the author's intimate understanding of the maritime world. It 'has its own ineluctable logic': the entire narrative operates in an understanding of the maritime world as a place where the supernatural occurs frequently and unquestionably.⁵²

In other words, and apparently paradoxically, the maritime supernatural is an expression of literary realism. It contains a distinctive sense of materiality. Supernatural actors and places are

⁵⁰ Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1956), p. 11.

⁵¹ Darko Suvin, 'On What Is and Is Not an SF Narration; With a List of 101 Victorian Books That Should Be Excluded from SF Bibliographies', *Science Fiction Studies*, 5 (1978), 45–57; p. 47.

⁵² Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M.M. Bakhtin* ed. Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), p. 102.

naturalistic yet also display evident signs of the unnatural. As the expression of the supernatural at sea, it disrupts groups of men at work, affecting their labour because they are cursed, or affecting the sense of community because they are set upon by ghosts. The haunting in the maritime supernatural is visceral, and explores the potential volatility of the maritime community on board ships. The visceral nature of the maritime supernatural is not only reflected in its physical supernatural actors, but also the materiality of the spectral ships and physical isolation of life on ships surrounded by the sea. The maritime supernatural relies for its horrifying effect largely on this sense of distance, physical and nearly grotesque bodies and the markers of national identity these bodies express.

The maritime supernatural as an expression of the spectral at sea functions as both narrative element and narrative structure. Both functions rely on the incontestable reality of the event. In Marryat's *The Phantom Ship*, it will be seen, the maritime supernatural structures the narrative, as the quest to find the Flying Dutchman provides protagonist Philip with a motive to go to sea. The supernatural is intrinsic to the narrative world of *The Phantom Ship*, despite the novel's deviations from this core storyline. Russell's maritime supernatural narratives move in worlds where the supernatural becomes part of reality. Although protagonists are initially sceptical and horrified by the supernatural potential of their situations, in both *The Death Ship* and *The Frozen Pirate* the protagonists' direct experiences remove any doubt regarding the reality of the maritime supernatural. In Hodgson's fiction too, characters are astonished by the horrifying nature of their situation but soon accept this as their new reality.

In many ways, the maritime supernatural unites time and space in the way Mikhail Bakhtin suggests in his contemplation of the chronotope in literature, where 'spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out whole' (Bakhtin, 84). The spectral ship and the maritime supernatural actor are spaces that embody particular temporalities which intrude on other temporalities. These embodiments of different temporalities meet in the same place, the ocean. Yet, the characterisation of the maritime supernatural as chronotopic is not entirely comfortable. Bakhtin connects time and space, but gives no attention to the possibility of clashing

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temporalities. Past, present and future meet in the maritime supernatural, but do not necessarily find agreement. The maritime supernatural creates space to discuss disorder and present the conflict of temporalities as crisis. This is done particularly through the a-temporal emotion of nostalgia, but also through remythologisation of the sea where traditional elements from maritime lore are placed in a different temporal context. The maritime supernatural genre contains elements of other genres from past and present, assembled into narratives that respond to contemporary fashions and anxieties.

Chapter 3: Frederick Marryat: duty and religion.

In 1821, the Dutchman first appeared in fiction, in a short story by an anonymous contributor in *Blackwood's Magazine* titled 'Vanderdecken's Message Home, or The Tenacity of Natural Affection'. Other variations followed: Washington Irving rewrote the legend in a chapter in *Bracebridge Hall* (1822), called 'The Storm-Ship', in which the Dutchman's ship appears on the river Hudson in New York. Edward Fitzball's theatre play *The Flying Dutchman! Or The Phantom Ship* premiered at the Royal Adelphi Theatre in 1826, and directly references 'Vanderdecken's Message Home' in its 1829 introduction.¹ These versions present the Dutchman legend as old and well-known, reinforced by the yarns spun by experienced, old and often weatherbeaten sailors. Vanderdecken consistently causes his own damnation by challenging the Christian God and his appearances take place in stormy, dark weather. Like its predecessors, *The Phantom Ship* is an expression of the maritime supernatural. It also, and more uniquely, incorporates an unconventional exploration of land-based religion and otherness.

Published in periodical instalments over two years with occasional months-long breaks, the narrative of *The Phantom Ship* is almost inevitably inconsistent. The first fifteen chapters were published monthly between March and October 1837. Three more chapters appeared in January and February 1838, after which a year-long break followed. The final 21 chapters were published monthly between February and August 1839.² *The Phantom Ship* consolidates its precursors, reusing and extending ways in which the Flying Dutchman makes his spectral appearances.

¹ See 'Vanderdecken's Message Home; or The Tenacity of Natural Affection' in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* (1821); Edward Fitzball, *The Flying Dutchman! Or, The Phantom Ship* (1826); Washington Irving, *Bracebridge Hall, or The Humorists* (1822); Secondary reading on these early-nineteenth-century Dutchmen includes Frederick Burwick and Manushag N. Powell, *British Pirates in Print and Performance* (2015); J. Q. Davies, 'Melodramatic Possessions: *The Flying Dutchman*, South Africa, and the Imperial Stage, ca. 1830' in *The Opera Quarterly* (2005); Barry Millington, 'The Flying Dutchman', 'Le vaisseau fantôme' and Other Nautical Yarns' in *The Musical Times* (1986).

² Publication details obtained through *The Wellesley Index to Victorian Periodicals* shows the first instalment of *The Phantom Ship* was published in *The New Monthly Magazine*, volume 49 of March 1837. See Appendix B for a detailed breakdown of *The Phantom Ship's* publication.

Vanderdecken appears several times throughout *The Phantom Ship*, each time under different circumstances. His ship has the unnatural ability to sail through any kind of weather and the Dutchman himself is being punished for blasphemy. These elements feature in all of the early-nineteenth-century Dutchman narratives. Marryat takes the reader on sea voyages across the globe, catching glimpses of the cursed Vanderdecken, but his Dutchman is so unchallenging it suggests the true focus of the narrative lies elsewhere. The maritime supernatural narrative creates a framework which facilitates Marryat's exploration of religious and national otherness.

This chapter reads *The Phantom Ship* as both an interpretation of the maritime supernatural as well as concerned with land-based religion and national otherness. It studies them separately, and suggests the two narratives making up the novel have respectively been over- and under-read in contemporary scholarship. It considers Marryat's use of Gothic techniques and tropes to convey his maritime supernatural. He does not reinvent the maritime supernatural or use it to address political or socio-economic issues. His particular addition to the legend, that Vanderdecken has an adolescent son whose mission it is to save his father, does not change how the maritime supernatural manifests itself. This chapter then shows how the maritime supernatural narrative facilitates a discussion of religious difference and acceptance.

Marryat uses Gothic themes throughout his maritime supernatural novel, particularly otherness, internal duplicity as well as external duality and the evil Catholic. It connects the maritime supernatural with the religious narrative, linking sea and land which are otherwise kept separate throughout the novel. For Margaret Cohen, discussing James Fenimore Cooper's early-nineteenth-century maritime adventure *The Pilot*, the use of Gothic techniques was intended 'for creating reader identification with the protagonists in danger. In the process, he [makes] the dangers palpable, heightening their emotional urgency' (Cohen, *Novel*, 157). In Cohen's interpretation, the Gothic is an expression of danger, and can be applied to maritime adventure fiction's descriptions of dangerous seascapes, weather and shoals as the maritime equivalent of sublime Gothic landscapes (Cohen, *Novel*, 157). Unlike Cooper, Marryat's descriptions of the seascape are not particularly Gothic; the Gothic effect instead arises from an uncomfortable sense

of doubleness that manifests itself as part of the narrative structure as well as a motif threaded through the novel.

Duality and doubleness are characteristic of the Gothic, a genre that has been described as both an amalgamation of literary supernatural tropes and a 'highly unstable genre [which] scattered its ingredients into various [nineteenth-century literary] models'.³ It in itself is characterised by heterogeneity. The evil Catholic priest and the uncanny double are incorporated in *The Phantom Ship*, but their use is complicated by inconsistencies. Rather than following the eighteenth-century Gothic model which imagines 'the European Other as Catholic, superstitious, barbarous, irrational, chaotic, rooted in the past [which allowed] a British audience to identify itself as Protestant, rational, ordered, stable and modern', Marryat's novel mixes these characteristics within characters (Jones, *Horror*, 9).

The main protagonist Philip is a Dutch Catholic, while his wife Amine is part European of nondescript origin and part of generic Arabic origin, adhering to no religion apart from a sort of natural witchcraft passed down to her through her Middle-Eastern mother. The English are mentioned in passing as the enemy at sea, but the greater danger is Philip's father, the cursed Vanderdecken who is also a Dutch Catholic. One of the two overbearing Catholic priests attempting to convert Amine is Portuguese, the other one Dutch. Amine is eventually killed by the Portuguese Inquisition in Goa, and Philip only manages to find his father once Philip discards his Catholic belief (but not before he adheres to the Catholic notion of forgiveness). These contradictions are confusing, but suggest the Other might be closer to the self than previously thought. This chapter will suggest the chaotic allocation of characteristics ultimately serves the novel's purpose of drawing together various seemingly polar opposites.

Marryat's widespread appeal solidified and popularised the maritime supernatural genre. His many maritime adventure novels were republished often by different publishing houses throughout the nineteenth century and translated into several European languages which were still

³ Jerrold E. Hogle, 'Introduction: the Gothic in western culture' in *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction* ed. Jerrold E. Hogle (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 1–20, p. 1.

being republished by the 1890s (Andrews, 'Manifestations', 192). Contemporary reviews of *The Phantom Ship* were largely positive; an 1839 advertisement in the *Morning Chronicle* and the *Morning Post* notes that '[t]his tale is the best Captain Marryat has yet written [...]. The scene of the death of Amine [...] and more particularly the account of the last interview of Philip Vanderdecken with his father [...] exhibit powers of description of a high and rare order'.⁴ Another advertisement printed a year earlier calls the narrative 'quite superior to anything which has emanated from the same author'.⁵ One contemporary advertisement in the *Morning Post* states simply that '*The Phantom Ship* improves as the story continues'.⁶

Several years after the novel's initial publication, as Marryat's melodramatic style was going out of fashion, reviews were less favourable. The novel's inconsistencies and stylistic problems were a particular weak point: Marryat 'wrote quickly and often carelessly and was complained at by the critics, but his position as a story-teller was assured' (Laughton, ODNB). R. Brimley Johnson, writing the introduction to an 1896 edition of *The Phantom Ship*, laments that the novel's 'general success [...] is marred by certain obvious failures in detail'.⁷ Johnson points out the author's poor attempt at producing the right historic setting, his 'philosophy of the unseen [...] is both weak and tiresome, and his religious discourses, coloured by prejudice against the Romanists, are all unconvincing. The closing scene savours of the Sunday-school' (Johnson, x). David Hannay, in his introduction to another 1896 version of *The Phantom Ship*, complains that its 'supernatural machinery is [...] too manifestly mechanical'.⁸ If Marryat had taken more trouble to 'work in the supernatural elements of the book with any sufficient plausibility', it would have resulted in a much more sophisticated novel (Hannay, 'Introduction', xi). In his biography of Marryat, Hannay notes that the writer makes good use of the Dutchman legend, although '[t]here is no great originality in

⁴ 'Captain Marryat's "Phantom Ship," A tale of the sea' in *Morning Chronicle*, 21730 (17 July 1839), n/p.

⁵ 'Colburn's New Monthly Magazine and Humorist for January' in *Morning Post* 20929 (19 January 1838), n/p.

⁶ Review of *The Phantom Ship* in *Morning Post*, 20694 (7 April 1837), p. 7.

⁷ R. Brimley Johnson (as R. B. J.), 'Introduction' to *The Phantom Ship* by Captain Marryat (London: J.M. Dent and Co. 1896), ix-x; p. x.

⁸ David Hannay, 'Introduction' to *The Phantom Ship* by Captain Marryat (London: Macmillan, 1896), vii-xv; p. xi. Subsequent references are to this edition and are given in parentheses as (Hannay, 'Introduction', page).

the incidents. [...] But the materials are well used. The story swings along'.⁹

A similar judgment is made by William Clark Russell in his editor's preface to a 1906 edition of *The Phantom Ship*. Russell sees the inconsistent interpretation of the supernatural as Marryat's fatal flaw: 'At one time his phantom ship is as substantial as solid timber and tangible cloth can make her. [...] At another time this ship is so visionary that she passes like a cold mist through another ship. You can see through her' (Russell, 'Introduction', viii). Russell considers the changing materiality of the ship, which is unaddressed in the novel, unacceptable. The Dutchman's ship, supernatural though she is, cannot change from solid to ephemeral and back; it is simply impossible. Failing to hold himself to 'the spectral conditions of his legend', Marryat fails to produce 'sincere and trustworthy art' (Russell, 'Introduction', viii).

The Phantom Ship, considered in the wider context of Marryat's oeuvre, is both a confirmation and departure from judgments like Hannay's and Russell's. For Virginia Woolf, the inconsistencies of Marryat's novel expose 'the bones and the muscles and the arteries' of a work which, she maintains, is 'a good exercise in criticism'.¹⁰ It is true that *The Phantom Ship* is stylistically uneven, a mixture of melodrama, maritime adventure and passages copied straight from history books (Hannay, 'Introduction', xiv). The Flying Dutchman narrative acts as framework, appealing to readers with its supernatural and sensational themes, but the novel's inconsistent construction make it easy to dismiss it as a simple popular narrative. Instead, I argue that Marryat's inconsistencies add a sense of urgency to his message of religious tolerance and cooperation. It shows Marryat was 'a sound craftsman, not marvellously but sufficiently endowed at his work' (Woolf, 43). Following the novel's rough division between sensational and conventional maritime supernatural and its inconsistent yet poignant exploration of religious and national otherness, this chapter will first consider the appearances of the Flying Dutchman throughout the novel, followed by a discussion of Marryat's land-based plot around religion.

⁹ David Hannay, *Life of Frederick Marryat* (London: Walter Scott, 1889), p. 122. Subsequent references are to this edition and are given in parentheses as (Hannay, *Life*, page).

¹⁰ Virginia Woolf, 'The Captain's Death Bed' in *The Captain's Death Bed and other essays* 1935 (London: The Hogarth Press, 1950), 39–48; p. 43.

3.1 *The Phantom Ship* (1837–39)

Marryat regularly wrote maritime adventure fiction but only ventured into the uncontested supernatural once, with *The Phantom Ship*. Marryat's other seemingly supernatural tale, *Snarleywow, or The Dog Fiend* (1837), immediately preceded *The Phantom Ship* and 'is nothing more than a series of vindictive reprisals, double, triple, and quadruple crosses, in keeping with the treasonous support of James II, circa 1699, which constitutes its political intrigue'.¹¹ David Hannay suggests that *Snarleywow* is one of Marryat's only novels that bears similarity to *The Phantom Ship*, calling it a 'romance with a strong element of *diablerie*' (Hannay, *Life*, 120). While it also takes place on a ship, involves a tyrannical captain, Anglo-Dutch relations and multiple apparent returns from the dead, I would argue that *Snarleywow* should not be considered a direct thematic precursor to *The Phantom Ship*. The two novels' abstracted similarities lose their resemblance when looked at more closely.

Apparent spectral apparitions in *Snarleywow* are brought on by guilt, not divine intervention or supernatural force. When Machiavellian protagonist Vanslyperken thinks he has killed his long-suffering servant Smallbones, Smallbones' ghost appears to his murderer, who 'passed a restless night [...] from the torments of conscience'.¹² Smallbones' ghost is actually not a ghost – Vanslyperken never succeeded in killing him and he pretends to be a ghost to scare his tormentor. This pattern of apparent death and resurrection is repeated throughout the novel, best summarised by this citation: "'Hath the sea given up its dead?" [...] "No, it ar'n't, 'cause why? I was never a-drowned"' (Marryat, *Snarleywow*, 299). Although Smallbones ultimately forgives Vanslyperken 'as I'm a good Christian', religion is not part of the novel's discourse (Marryat, *Snarleywow*, 299). The eponymous Snarleywow, a fiendish dog, like Smallbones is often presumed

¹¹ Mark Spilka, 'Victorian Keys to the Early Hemingway: Captain Marryat', *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction*, 17 (1984), 116–40; p. 124.

¹² Frederick Marryat, *Snarleywow, or The Dog Fiend* 1837 (London: Routledge, 1856), p. 146.

dead and resurfaces relatively unscathed. This gives the appearance of the supernatural, but does not confirm it; Snarleyyow is perhaps tenacious and mean, but he is ultimately a normal dog. The supernatural is used as a theme, but does not determine the narrative logic. It is subordinate to the adventure plot, and is part of its many double-crossings.

The Phantom Ship, on the other hand, treats the supernatural as a reality intrinsic to the narrative logic. The purpose of the maritime supernatural in Marryat's novel, however, has been subject to academic debate. These studies, of which there are not many, have a tendency to focus on the maritime supernatural narrative only, and moreover interprets it in peculiar ways. Agnes Andeweg argues *The Phantom Ship* is 'not only a novel about father and son, the redemptive power of religion and the glory days of the sailing ship, but also a story about international shipping, colonial trade and intercultural relations' (Andeweg, *Vliegende Hollander*, 51). Andeweg does not include the Dutchman in her summary of what the novel is about, which suggests the novel is not *about* the supernatural.

Instead, Andeweg interprets the Flying Dutchman as a mediator of the cultural memory of the European colonial past in relation to Dutch national identity. She 'conceive[s] of the spectre as a conceptual metaphor that helps us to understand which aspects of the past have become spectral and why' (Andeweg, 'Manifestations', 188). Within the Dutchman legend, she sees a 'confrontation between past and present [...], often in some way relating to the Dutch colonial past' (Andeweg, 'Manifestations', 189). Marryat's *The Phantom Ship* is mentioned as one of the many examples of early-nineteenth-century literary invocations of the Dutchman, whose popularity she explains as a result of Anglo-Dutch rivalry as well as a nostalgic reaction to technological advancement. The effect of the maritime supernatural in *The Phantom Ship* – Andeweg calls it 'gothic spectrality' – arises from the contrast between 'a traditional means of transport, the sailing ship, and its modern successor', the steamship (Andeweg, 'Manifestations', 193). She provides no textual evidence for this claim, but seems to conclude this from Marryat's 'first-hand experience in adapting a steam vessel for naval operations in Burma in 1823' (Andeweg, 'Manifestations', 193).

This Gothicised contrast between the new and the modern, Andeweg surmises, is the cause for the nostalgia she perceives in *The Phantom Ship*. The problem with this is that there is no textual evidence for the presence of nostalgia, nor does Andeweg supply any that could be interpreted as nostalgic. Marryat's novel does not express a longing for a maritime past that is impossible to return to, and the maritime supernatural is therefore not used to investigate or express a particular kind of nostalgia. Marryat and his contemporaries (which includes James Fenimore Cooper and Richard Henry Dana) were preoccupied with writing the sea as it was rather than reminisce about how seafaring used to be (Cohen, *Novel*, 136–37). As later chapters in this thesis will show, nostalgia is a feature of maritime fiction of the last decades of the nineteenth century, but is not part of the early-nineteenth-century literary landscape.

Joanna Mstowska, in *Various Aspects of Mimesis in Selected Sea Novels* (2013), has interpreted the maritime supernatural differently, drawing on the maritime legend's religious theme and interpreting it as a parable of a sailor who challenges God. She argues that Marryat's Dutchman represents the 'Biblical archetype of the fall of man as a result to succumbing to Satan's temptation'.¹³ Vanderdecken is interpreted as a Faustian character who 'perceives himself as an outstanding individual, ready to challenge the raging sea and able to emerge victorious over nature' (Mstowska, 42). The identification of Vanderdecken as Faust, wanting to know the unknowable, to be better than others, is a poignant insight that resonates with the symbolism of attempting to master the unmasterable natural force of the sea. It simultaneously reveals the problematic side of Mstowska's analysis. In alleging that Vanderdecken perceives himself as anything, she gives him a conscious presence in the narrative whereas in fact, he is absent for most of the narrative.

Mstowska initially argues this presence is non-existent; she observes that 'the doomed captain expresses himself through silence: the externalization of his thoughts and feelings is in

¹³ Joanna Mstowska, *Dis/Continuities Volume 3: Various Aspects of Mimesis in Selected Sea Novels of Frederick Marryat, James F. Cooper and Richard H. Dana* ed. Mirosława Buchholz (Frankfurt a.M.: Peter Lang, 2013), p. 36.

Marryat's novel almost non-existent' (Mstowska, 36). She takes substantial liberties with Marryat's text by following this a few pages later with claims that '[t]he immensity and vastness of the sea are awe-inspiring for the Captain and make him feel insignificant in confrontation with the power of the element' or that '[t]he monotony of continuous wandering gradually purifies the proud Captain of egoism and opens his eyes to his fragility and insignificance in confrontation with the all-powerful sea' (Mstowska, 43). The reader is never witness to these moments of insight. It is possible they occur as a result of Vanderdecken's punishment but the lack of textual evidence for these moments of insight and growth show this argument can only be based on inference.

Mstowska brings Vanderdecken's inferred motives to bear on her main theoretical model based on René Girard's triangle of mimetic desire, in which three literary characters strongly wish to become like the other and succeed partially through mediation. Mstowska suggests that Vanderdecken desires to '[discover] the enormous divine potential within himself. He is convinced that the better he imitates God, the closer to perfection he comes' (Mstowska, 48). She introduces the character of Satan to the narrative to complete the Girardian triangle of mimetic desire. It is worth quoting this moment at length to illustrate the extent of Mstowska's inference. She argues that

In *The Phantom Ship*, Satan takes advantage of Vanderdecken's frustration as well as his readiness to risk his life or to give up his soul to satisfy his desire for conquering at all costs and being powerful enough to master nature. It is Satan who kindles the Captain's passion for discovery to an enormous extent and tempts him with the promise of achieving God's perfection. [...] At the moment of committing blasphemy, the Captain rejects God and, like Adam, reaches for the fruit of the tree of knowledge (Mstowska, 47).

Compared to the passage from *The Phantom Ship* where Vanderdecken recounts the moments leading up to the curse (incidentally, not cited by Mstowska, only described in the quotation above), it becomes clear that the description of the actual events are much more shallow than what Mstowska describes. Marryat's Vanderdecken relates that

For nine weeks did I try to force my passage against the elements round the stormy Cape, but without success; and I swore terribly. For nine weeks more did I carry sail against the adverse winds and currents, and yet could gain no ground; and then I blasphemed,—ay, terribly blasphemed. Yet still I persevered. [...] Even this fearful death [of the pilot] did not

restrain me; and I swore by the fragment of the Holy Cross, preserved in that relic now hanging round your neck, *that I would gain my point in defiance of storm and seas, of lightning, of heaven, or of hell*, even if I should beat about until the Day of Judgment.

My oath was registered in thunder, and in streams of sulphurous fire. The hurricane burst upon the ship, the canvas flew away in ribbons; mountains of seas swept over us, and in the centre of a deep o'erhanging cloud, which shrouded all in utter darkness, were written in letters of livid flame, these words—UNTIL THE DAY OF JUDGMENT (Marryat, *Phantom Ship*, 9–10; emphasis added).

Mstowska undoubtedly infers Vanderdecken's desire to surpass God from his oath that 'I would gain my point in defiance of storm and seas, of lightning, of heaven, or of hell'. Her inference of Satan's false promises exposes the mechanics of the curse, showing how damnation works according to the Bible and imposing this on *The Phantom Ship*. This reading implies that Marryat intended to write this intricate plot of temptation and desire according to very precise Biblical rules. Mstowska gives Marryat's writing a sophistication it does not have, introducing serious theological and philosophical speculation that is not actually present in the novel. However, the question in this chapter does not pertain to the sophistication of the novel. In place of that something else is going on: it is a disordered narrative which tries to capture an urgency that draws together sea voyaging and landedness.

The sustained inference of Mstowska's argument is both telling of Marryat's disordered narrative construction and is symptomatic of academic work on the Dutchman, of whom most seem to know a little and infer the rest. In a sense, Marryat did the same in his novelisation of this maritime yarn. Mstowska joins in a remythologisation of the maritime legend rather than analyse Marryat's text. The maritime supernatural narrative in *The Phantom Ship* is significantly over-read in contemporary scholarship. The term Gothic and its derivatives seem to be used lightly in reference to *The Phantom Ship*. Andeweg, Cohen and Mstowska all call the novel a variation of the Gothic genre or attribute Gothic elements to it but they do not back this with a close-reading analysis. The following sections contain a close-reading analysis of the maritime supernatural events in *The Phantom Ship* which suggests the Gothic is used both as narrative element and as structure to forge a strong connection between the maritime supernatural narrative and the

landed religious anxiety narrative.

Whereas eighteenth-century Gothic is characterised by transgression and excess which ‘seemed to promote vice and violence’, by the nineteenth century the Gothic genre had turned inward, focussing on doubles, duplicity and, ultimately, identity (Botting, 4; 11). Marryat uses duality throughout, at times obviously but also in more subtle, uncanny ways that construct the novel’s plot. The following sections consider the maritime supernatural scenes of *The Phantom Ship* as an element of the novel’s Gothic duality. They analyse instances where the supernatural occurs and argue that these repetitive scenes of interrupted seafaring not only add sensational excitement, but, as the double of the landed narrative of contested religion discussed below, expresses the novel’s own duality.

Apparitions are often preceded by sailors’ spinning yarns about previous encounters with the Flying Dutchman. On Philip’s first voyage on the *Ter Schilling*, the ship is becalmed ‘about two days’ sail’ from the Cape of Good Hope, the Dutchman’s traditional haunting locale (Marryat, *Phantom Ship*, 68). The conversation quickly turns to the Flying Dutchman; one sailor remarks that ‘[t]hey say that to meet with him is worse than meeting with the devil’ (Marryat, *Phantom Ship*, 69). Another states that ‘[h]e has been seen, that’s sartain, and just as sartain that ill luck follows the vessel that falls in with him’ (Marryat, *Phantom Ship*, 69). ‘He cruises off the Cape’, says another, the location where, unsurprisingly, the *Ter Schilling* crew find themselves at that moment (Marryat, *Phantom Ship*, 69). A fourth sailor says, ‘I can only tell what I’ve heard. It’s a doomed vessel; they were pirates, and cut the captain’s throat, I believe’ (Marryat, *Phantom Ship*, 69). The sailors, stitching together yarns about the Dutchman in their rough speech, do not speak to Mstowska’s thesis on the intricacies of theology. Instead, they address a particular maritime materiality that pertains to the reality of superstition.

The pilot Schriften, who is also affected by the curse and is part of Vanderdecken’s punishment, knows the truth: ‘the captain is in her now – and a villain he was’ (Marryat, *Phantom Ship*, 69). From the fact that the Dutchman ‘always wants to send letters home when he boards vessels that he falls in with’, Schriften deduces that he had a wife (Marryat, *Phantom Ship*, 69). But

when these letters are taken on board, the vessel that receives them 'is sure to be lost, with every soul on board' (Marryat, *Phantom Ship*, 69). The different versions and experiences of the individual crew members do not contradict each other, but contribute to an atmosphere of uncanny anticipation. The yarn-spinning takes place on a becalmed ship; the perfect, eerie environment to tell each other these kind of supernatural stories none of the speakers can quite grasp. The fact that everything is still and unmoving adds to the uncanny atmosphere of the scene; there is no shipboard labour that needs to be undertaken, so the sailors spin yarns that makes them want to set sail, but they are unable to do so.

Throughout the novel, the notoriety of the legend is highlighted. Both seamen and landmen are said to have heard of the Dutchman, whose legend 'was too well known' (Marryat, *Phantom Ship*, 136). The Catholic priest Seysen, in Philip's home town of Terneuzen, mentions he 'had heard of the Phantom Ship before [...] and moreover that its appearance was the precursor of disaster' (Marryat, *Phantom Ship*, 107). This ubiquity creates a context in which the Dutchman becomes more likely to appear, which he does in a myriad of ways. Each of the Dutchman's appearances contains unnatural elements: while Philip's ship is becalmed, the Dutchman's vessel, 'although it was a perfect calm, she was to all appearance buffeting in a violent gale, plunging and lifting over a surface that was as smooth as glass, now careening to her bearing, then recovering herself' (Marryat, *Phantom Ship*, 76). The contrast between Philip's own ship, still becalmed, and the Flying Dutchman's ship, appearing to be sailing through a storm, is striking. The *Ter Schilling* crew see and hear the ship creaking and the men on board before she disappears. Philip then feels a hand upon his shoulder, and 'cold darted through his whole frame'; it is Schriften, yelling 'Philip Vanderdecken – that's the *Flying Dutchman*!' (Marryat, *Phantom Ship*, 76).

In another voyage, a similar sense of unnatural ability is conveyed by the Dutchman's ship. Philip, on board the *Vrouw Katerina*, witnesses the approach of a large ship in a storm. Marryat's own experience with sailing is evident in the episode, and his use of maritime vocabulary evidences the impossibility of the events. He employs what Cohen calls 'active description', incorporating 'both a sequence of actions and dialogue' as if obviously known to the reader (Cohen, 'Traveling

Genres', 489). This furthers the reality effect of the narrative. For readers unfamiliar with the professional vocabulary, it creates an 'aura of authenticity', whereas familiar readers can 'appreciate the accuracy of the details' (Cohen, 'Traveling Genres', 488; 490). The active description clarifies the supernatural nature of the scene, pointing out the differences between natural and spectral ship. It is pointed out that,

In a gale, in which no vessel could carry the topsails, the Vrow Katerina being under close-reefed foresails and staysails, the ship seen to leeward was standing under a press of sail – topgallant-sail, royals, flying-jib, and every stitch of canvass which could be set in a light breeze. The waves were running mountains high, bearing each minute the Vrow Katerina down to the gunwale, and the ship seen appeared not to be affected by the tumultuous waters, but sailed steadily and smoothly on an even keel (Marryat, *Phantom Ship*, 136).

Marryat makes it clear that the mysterious, unnamed ship behaves unlike any natural ship would. The landed reader does not have to know exactly what each sail is for; Marryat's detailed description of normal sailing conventions followed on the *Vrow Katerina* contrast starkly with what is going on with the approaching spectral ship. The active description creates a sense of maritime realism. Marryat's clarifications that contrast the spectral ship with normal, natural ships ensure the scene remains accessible to the landed reader, allowing them to focus on the unnaturalness of the episode, rather than get tangled up in the maritime vocabulary and miss the point of the spectral ship's apparition (Cohen, 'Traveling Genres', 489).

Other uncanny appearances of the Dutchman follow. The supernatural action is displaced to the Straits of Magellan off Cape Horn, where Philip captains his first ship, the *Dort*. His admiral orders him to sail ahead of his ship since the *Dort* 'drew much less water' (Marryat, *Phantom Ship*, 160). A few days later, at night, the *Dort*'s crew notice that 'the admiral's ship was ahead of them instead of astern' (Marryat, *Phantom Ship*, 161). No-one on board has any recollection of the one ship overtaking the other. Philip can only follow the admiral's ship, even though he knows they are very close to land (Marryat, *Phantom Ship*, 161). As Philip's ship does not have a light on her stern, in the dark it is impossible to say the *Dort* is no longer ahead. Then she strikes heavily on the rocks and gets stuck. They fire a gun to warn the admiral. This is answered by the admiral's ship behind

them (Marryat, *Phantom Ship*, 161). Looking forwards, they see 'the vessel ahead was apparently sailing on over the land' (Marryat, *Phantom Ship*, 162). One of the seamen exclaims 'That's the Flying Dutchman, by all that is holy' after which the vessel disappears (Marryat, *Phantom Ship*, 162).

The apparition of the Dutchman is less expected in the Straits of Magellan than it is around the Cape of Good Hope; it is not the Dutchman's usual haunting location and no yarn-spinning precedes this supernatural event. The identification of the spectral ship is uncanny; what was thought to be familiar, the admiral's ship, becomes uncomfortably unfamiliar by the realisation that she is actually a spectre. Marryat's interpretation of the Flying Dutchman legend is less concrete than what Russell outlines in his 1906 editor's introduction; Marryat's Vanderdecken is not, as most Flying Dutchmen including Russell's, 'restricted to that space of ocean which washes Agulhas' (Russell, 'Introduction', v). There is no clear acknowledgement of the horrific potential of the Dutchman's ubiquity – the removal of predictability has great horrifying potential but it is left unaddressed. Addressing it would suggest a narrative strategy that accounts for the supernatural, but the arbitrariness of the apparitions instead evidence what Virginia Woolf calls the 'bones and arteries', or mechanics, of writing (Woolf, 43).

Marryat uses the same scheme of sudden realisation of the supernatural throughout: on one of Philip's last journeys, it appears his ship, the *Utrecht*, is about to collide with another ship which sails towards them in a heavy storm. The *Utrecht* is unable to turn around and the other ship keeps advancing. All sailors yell out 'ship ahoy' but 'it was not attended to: down came the vessel upon them' (Marryat, *Phantom Ship*, 192). The crew of the *Utrecht* prepare to board the other ship since the impact will sever theirs in two. However,

there was no shock – concussion of the two vessels – the stranger appeared to cleave through them – her hull passed along in silence – no cracking of timbers – no falling of masts – the foreyard passed through their mainsail, yet the canvas was unrent – the whole vessel appeared to cut through the *Utrecht*, yet left no trace of injury – nor fast, but slowly, as if she were really sawing through her by the heaving and tossing of the sea with her sharp prow (Marryat, *Phantom Ship*, 193).

Only at the last moment, the advancing ship is revealed to be spectral, made of some otherworldly material which allows her to methodically go through the *Utrecht* without creating any damage. The urgency with which the non-collision is related adds to the sense of uncanny pervading the scene. The spectral ship cuts through the *Utrecht* relentlessly. The scene is described in spectral snapshots; the dashes emphasise the sense of helplessness of the *Utrecht's* crew, adding a sense of ghostly smoothness to the passage.

The immediate result of the cursed Dutchman's appearances on the crews' well-being and coherence is poignant. After the apparition of novel's first spectral ship, the crew is in shock: 'for a moment or more not a word was uttered by a soul on board'; some stare at the spot where the ship just vanished, while others 'turned away full of gloomy and foreboding thoughts' (Marryat, *Phantom Ship*, 76). Moments before the apparition the crew was sharing their experiences and yarns but afterwards the fraternity is abandoned. Philip removes himself from deck entirely, going to his cabin, bury his face 'in the coverlid of his bed', and pray 'until he had recovered his usual energy and courage' and he is composed enough to 'enable him to look forward calmly to danger and difficulty, and feel prepared to meet it with the heroism of a martyr' (Marryat, *Phantom Ship*, 78). The disintegration of the forecastle fraternity is a reminder that the supernatural apparition removes the small sense of domesticity contained within the shipboard community. The experience of being haunted at sea is communal, as it affects the entire crew, but also forces the community apart.

The ship's social cohesion disintegrates most dramatically on the *Dort* and the admiral's ship the *Lion*, where mutiny breaks out after the two ships are led onto the rocks by the Dutchman's spectral ship. The admiral, who had already displayed tyrannical behaviour before the supernatural apparition, begins executing sailors and officers on his ship, and a summons for Philip is interpreted as a potential death sentence. Philip declines, saying he considers himself 'no longer [...] under his authority' – a statement that amounts to mutiny (Marryat, *Phantom Ship*, 164). There are no consequences for Philip, however. The seamen consider 'the appearance of the Phantom Ship, which had occasioned their present disaster, was a judgment upon the admiral, for his conduct in

having so cruelly *deserted* the poor commodore' (Marryat, *Phantom Ship*, 164). After the death of the admiral, Philip is put in charge and later, on the *Utrecht*, draws on his experiences to convince his crew that it is possible to survive the Dutchman's apparitions.

As his second in command laments that they 'shall never reach port again', Philip attempts to prevent the disintegration of the forecabin fraternity by drawing on his own experience, asserting 'that some disaster may happen to us, after the appearance of this vessel, is most probable; I have seen her before more than once, and disasters then did happen; but here I am, alive and well, therefore it does not prove that we cannot escape as I have done before' (Marryat, *Phantom Ship*, 195). No immediate disaster takes place, and '[m]any days of gentle breezes and favouring winds gradually wore off the panic occasioned by the supernatural appearance; and, if not forgotten, it was referred to either in jest or with indifference' (Marryat, *Phantom Ship*, 195). The threat of the disruption of social cohesion on board ship as the result of the supernatural apparition leads to the inevitable disaster that follows. The lack of normal shipboard relations would mean that practically, the ship is no longer sailed by a group of men with the common goal of keeping the ship afloat: 'every man preferred solitude and his own thoughts. The Phantom Ship dwelt on their imaginations and oppressed their brains' (Marryat, *Phantom Ship*, 79). Marryat's crews disintegrate upon facing the Dutchman, abandoning the common effort of seafaring.

The inevitable shipwreck and disaster follow each of Marryat's Dutchman scenes. The *Ter Schilling*, though she was becalmed as the Dutchman's spectral ship sailed past, is caught in a storm. Both the captain and the mate are incapacitated by injury, and the crew quickly descends into a panicked mutiny as the ship begins to sink. Philip is implausibly saved by a pet bear that was on board, and is the only survivor of the wreck. The *Vrouw Katerina* inexplicably catches fire, causing panic among her passengers as the sailors attempt to put out the fire. The ship explodes, resulting in 'great loss of life' (Marryat, *Phantom Ship*, 144). There is again the threat of disintegration of social cohesion after the explosion; despite Philip's and the other officers' admonitions to the remaining crew to work calmly on creating a raft, the captain has to guard the spirit-room hatch, so 'that not a single person was intoxicated' (Marryat, *Phantom Ship*, 144). Eventually, thirty-six out of

three-hundred souls survive the wreck following the Dutchman's appearance. After the mutiny of the *Dort* and the *Lion*, most crew die, and the *Utrecht*, despite several days of respite, is eventually beached and sinks. A raft is built, towed by the ship's boat, but is set upon by pirates, who kill all the mutinous men on the by now detached boat.

These sensational vignettes of maritime supernatural make up a substantial part of the narrative. They convey the maritime supernatural in unsurprising ways. Although the Flying Dutchman is rarely seen up close, the supernatural nature of his ship and her unnatural abilities are unmistakable. He appears in all possible ways a spectral ship could be imagined to appear, and the disastrous consequences are varied. Philip is the morally righteous hero through all his ordeals, and as the fore-castle fraternity around him collapses he manages to retain a sense of duty and purpose. At the same time, the Dutchman-scenes do not bring the narrative forward. Philip continually fails to reach his father and absolve him from his curse, despite encountering the supernatural ship numerous times. There is no engagement with socio-political questions, no anxious remarks on the status of shipboard labour. It adds a sense of supernatural sensation, and Marryat's maritime supernatural evidently does not represent theological reflection or seafaring as modern crisis. Instead, as Woolf suggests, it shows the bones and arteries of Marryat's writing.

In *The Phantom Ship*, the maritime space is a superstitious place where religion plays a small part. This is an apparent contradiction, because the Flying Dutchman's prolonged existence is a punishment from the Christian God. Nevertheless, Marryat restricts the religious narrative to the land between landed characters. His maritime supernatural represents itself: the supernatural at sea. It displays the sea as an Other place further alienated by unnatural events. Religion does not bring order to the superstitious seafaring world in Marryat's realm. Nevertheless, it is the same superstitious maritime space that facilitates discussions of religious tolerance. It enables characters to travel between continents and nations with different religious views. This section has noted how the supernatural interrupts and complicates the seafaring profession by disrupting the sense of fraternity in the fore-castle community of sailors. It is often Philip's adherence to his duty that ensures his survival. Duty is a particular term in the maritime profession, but Marryat's curious use

of it in *The Phantom Ship*, referring to the maritime profession as well as Philip's mission to absolve his father, signals another instance of narrative duality that moreover substantiates a link between the maritime and supernatural aspects of the novel.

Andeweg notes that the most important character development undergone by Philip is that he increasingly resembles his father throughout the narrative (Andeweg, *Vliegende Hollander*, 39). As Philip returns from one of his voyages, for instance, he is in such a hurry to see Amine that he climbs through the window of their cottage – upon which Amine, who is recovering from an illness, thinks she sees Philip's ghost (Marryat, *Phantom Ship*, 118). This scene is reminiscent of the final interaction between Philip's father William Vanderdecken and his wife Catherine; William, cursed but permitted a final visit ashore, similarly enters 'at the casement' (Marryat, *Phantom Ship*, 8). This obvious, unsubtle doubling of Philip and his father occurs frequently in the novel, but a more subtle duality threads through the narrative too. It lies in Marryat's curious use of the word "duty". While in other Marryat novels it is exclusively used to refer to the sailor's occupation, in *The Phantom Ship* it is used in two ways. It does refer to the maritime occupation, but doubles to refer to Philip's supernatural mission. The occupational duty-narrative is doubled by the compelling duty forced onto Philip to rescue his father. This section will consider interpretations of duty in maritime studies as well as Marryat's use in some of his adventure novels. Then I will give a full reading of how duty works specifically in *The Phantom Ship*.

Cohen regrettably omits duty from her lengthy discussion on mariner's craft which, she argues, is 'a characteristic set of demeanors [that] comprise[s] the mariner's excellence in action' (Cohen, *Novel*, 15). The elements which are said to constitute craft, or define the excellent and exemplary seaman, are carefully listed; using James Cook's report of his stranding and subsequent salvage of HMS *Endeavour* on the Great Barrier Reef, Cohen begins her study by highlighting elements of craft such as 'prudence', 'sea legs', 'resolution', 'collectivity', 'compleat knowledge' and so forth (Cohen, *Novel*, 18–58). Seeing how craft is meant to denote characteristics of sailors throughout history, one would expect that a sense of duty would be included. Its omission is a significant oversight; if an experienced, crafty mariner as Marryat demonstrably places such

emphasis on the importance of duty, occupational or otherwise, one would expect it to be mentioned as one of the elements of craft.

A sense of duty to the work, the ship, and fellow crew members is not explicitly mentioned in Cohen's exhaustive indexation of craft. While it may be implied in the section on collectivity – Cohen speaks of 'allocated duties to fulfil' and 'clarif[ication of] the responsibilities of different members of the expedition for its outcome' – the duty in the occupational sense, in which Marryat uses it, is mostly neglected (Cohen, *Novel*, 34). Later in Cohen's study, duty is equated with 'excellence in action'; knowing what to do and when to do it, doing it well without endangering the self and others by keeping calm and collected (Cohen, *Novel*, 140). Cohen presents the (literary) sailor's life as a series of challenges overcome by 'performing the mariner's craft', using an 'exemplary individual who would embody craft in its multifaceted mastery' (Cohen, *Novel*, 137). Craft, throughout her study, is shown to be the representation of the compleat mariner as 'an icon of effective practice and human ingenuity, able to beat brutal high-risk conditions against all odds, while pushing knowledge to the frontier and beyond' (Cohen, *Novel*, 15). By the nineteenth century, she argues, this mariner is rarely identified by anything but his profession. His work defines who he is.

Tim Fulford shows how several early-nineteenth-century authors revered naval professionalism, duty and integrity. Authors like Marryat and Coleridge, but also a traditionally landed author like Jane Austen, used exemplary naval officers in their writings to off-set corrupt, land-based figures of authority. Fulford shows that the consensus among these writers is found in Robert Southey's argument that 'only a "compulsive" "sense of duty" among rulers could prevent social disintegration'.¹⁴ He notes that Marryat's officers are 'embodiments of the virtues thought necessary for command [...] such as patriotism, self-reliance, courage, paternalism, and, above all, attentiveness to duty' (Fulford, 162). In his pamphlet *Suggestions for the Abolition of the Present*

¹⁴ Tim Fulford, 'Romanticizing the Empire: The Naval Heroes of Southey, Coleridge, Austen, and Marryat', *MLQ: Modern Language Quarterly*, 60.2 (1999), 161–96; p. 178, quoting Mark Storey, *Robert Southey: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 319. Subsequent references to Fulford are to this edition and are given in parentheses.

System of Impressment, in the Naval Service (1822), Marryat 'advocated a professionalized navy, officered by "well-educated and well-informed young men"' who could be trusted to fulfil their duty to the navy and to Britain itself (Fulford, 189, quoting from *Suggestions*). In this pamphlet, duty is given more meaning than simply doing one's job. Reading much of Marryat's other fiction, however, it becomes clear that Marryat generally writes duty as synonymous with maritime professionalism.

Joseph Conrad, in his essay on Marryat's novels in *Notes on Life and Letters*, recognises that the sea fails to play an important role in Marryat's works: 'He loved his country first, the Service next, the sea perhaps not at all'.¹⁵ Conrad points here to a theme that is key to Marryat's maritime literature; that of duty. In Marryat's first novel, *Frank Mildmay, or The Naval Officer* (1829), the word "duty" occurs often and throughout, but almost exclusively refers to the execution of the protagonist's profession. Frank Mildmay complains that '[t]here was a part of my duty which, I am free to confess, I hated: this was keeping watch at night'.¹⁶ In a frankly quite bizarre deviation from the main narrative, the eponymous naval officer becomes a theatre singer and lives with an actress called Eugenia, forgetting his 'family, profession, and even Emily', his other love interest (Marryat, *Mildmay*, 124). He is found out when his father, unaware of his son's theatrical exploits, sees the piece. Being discovered shocks Mildmay out of his theatrical distractions and back into the real world of seafaring duty: 'I was awoke from this dream of happiness, by a curious incident. I thought it disastrous at the time, but am now convinced that it was fraught with good, since it brought me back to my profession, *recalled me to a sense of duty*, and shewed me the full extent of my disgraceful situation' (Marryat, *Mildmay*, 125; emphasis added). Here, duty is equated with seafaring work; life on shore is intentionally ridiculed and presented as a frivolous distraction. This is repeated at the end of the novel, where Mildmay says he 'had been a week on board, doing duty during the day, and flirting on shore, at Mr. Somerville's at Blackheath, during the evening'

¹⁵ Joseph Conrad, 'Tales of the Sea' in *Notes on Life and Letters* 1898 (London: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1949), 53–57; p. 55.

¹⁶ Frederick Marryat, *Frank Mildmay, or The Naval Officer* 1829 (London: Routledge, Warne and Routledge, 1863), p. 54.

(Marryat, *Mildmay*, 302). Shore life evidently does not involve anything that comes close to duty.

Similar views on duty-as-work are expressed in Marryat's other maritime adventure fiction. In *Mr Midshipman Easy*, published two years before the first instalment of *The Phantom Ship*, protagonist Jack Easy is hardly the epitome of duty and responsibility. He asserts that 'doing nothing was infinitely preferable to doing duty'.¹⁷ The word "duty" is again used as a direct synonym for work. This dislike of work is later repeated by the narrator: 'As our hero never has shown any remarkable predilection for duty, the reader will not be surprised at his requesting from Captain Wilson a few days on shore, previous to his going on board of the *Aurora*' (Marryat, *Easy*, 241). Jack Easy shows some development, however; while at first he is happy to avoid his duties, he becomes more responsible after the death of his father. With his inheritance he buys his own ship, and, once the ship is fitted and ready to sail, '[t]he men were mustered, and Jack made them a long speech upon subordination, discipline, activity, duty, and so forth' (Marryat, *Easy*, 368). Jack Easy's development from a lazy layabout to a responsible captain and ship-owner instructing others on the importance of duty is a poignant example of the improving quality of working on ship-board.

As a captain in the Royal Navy, Marryat knew first-hand the importance of duty. It hung in the air as he shipped as a midshipman in 1806 – just a year earlier at the onset of the Battle of Trafalgar, Admiral Horatio Nelson famously signalled to his fleet that 'England expects that every man will do his duty'.¹⁸ Tom Pocock's biography of Frederick Marryat opens with a young Marryat watching Nelson's funeral procession in London, of which Marryat himself later wrote that he 'felt that death could have no terrors if followed by such a funeral; and I determined that I would be buried in the same manner'.¹⁹ Nelson's duty is more than simply doing one's job. There is an instinctive moral obligation implied, one that cannot be taught but needs to be felt.

In *The Phantom Ship*, duty is both a rational obligation to work and an instinctive obligation towards a greater cause that motivates the narrative. This last sense of duty removes Philip's

¹⁷ Frederick Marryat, *Mr Midshipman Easy* 1836 (London: Richard Bentley, 1838), p. 222.

¹⁸ J.K. Laughton, *Nelson* (London: Macmillan, 1895), p. 221.

¹⁹ Tom Pocock, *Captain Marryat: Seaman, Writer and Adventurer* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2000), p. 15.

agency as protagonist and forces him to go to sea until his father is absolved of his curse. The curse that directs the narrative makes decisions instinctive rather than rational, and ends with a compulsion to finish the narrative. Despite Philip's assertion that 'we are free agents, and to a certain extent, are permitted to direct our own destinies', his mission to absolve his father from the curse prevents him from freely live his life ashore with Amine (Marryat, *Phantom Ship*, 130). In this sense, reminiscent of the family curse which voiced nineteenth-century Gothic's obsession with a persistent past making its mark on contemporary society, Philip's supernatural duty to his father duplicates Vanderdecken's curse, which prevents both of them from returning to shore.²⁰

On the one hand, the narrative follows Philip's professional development from second mate who lacks authority to captain with deserved respect. On the other, the primary impetus of his voyages is his supernatural duty to his father which compels him to continually go to sea until his mission is accomplished. The two duty-narratives play out side by side. The doubling effect Gothicises the Dutchman legend into an ancestral curse affecting Philip's mission. Calling the supernatural mission a duty throughout, Marryat suggests there is some will or incentive from Philip himself, but actually he is prevented from making his own decisions once he accepts the mission. It suggests a sense of obligation from within, but it arrives, as maritime assignments would, by letter from the outside.

After the first encounter with the Flying Dutchman, with the other officers incapacitated by injuries sustained in a storm, the crew, 'in their drunken state' refuse to listen to Philip's commands (Marryat, *Phantom Ship*, 103). "'He," they said, "was no sailor, and was not to teach them how to steer the ship"' (Marryat, *Phantom Ship*, 103). Despite his relatively high official status as second mate, Philip's inexperience invites rebellion. He needs to earn the men's respect, which comes gradually as he undertakes more journeys. After the wreck of *Vrow Katerina*, her crew and passengers land at Table Bay in their boats and rafts, and Philip is made captain of the *Dort*, which is found at anchor there with most of her hands succumbed to scurvy.

²⁰ David Punter and Glennis Byron, *The Gothic* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), p. 29.

Upon their recovery, they sail to the East Indies as part of a fleet. Philip is a natural leader and, importantly, is loved by his crew. Having obtained the rank of captain, Philip now has the same level of authority as his father. Unlike his father, however, Philip feels so strongly for his crew that he, as he 'perceived the body of the young man [hung for insubordination] still swinging in the wind, he almost wished that he was in his place' (Marryat, *Phantom Ship*, 196). This self-sacrificing approach is in stark contrast with the elder Vanderdecken. Relating the moment he was cursed to his wife, William Vanderdecken shows his sense of professional duty was not directed at his men, saying

For nine weeks did I try to force my passage against the elements round the stormy Cape, but without success; and I swore terribly. For nine weeks more did I carry sail against the adverse winds and currents, and yet could gain no ground; and then I blasphemed, – ay, terribly blasphemed. *Yet still I persevered. The crew, worn out with long fatigue, would have had me return to the Table Bay; but I refused* (Marryat, *Phantom Ship*, 20; emphasis added).

Where William Vanderdecken abused his authority as captain and forces his own will on an unwilling crew, Philip uses it to rescue them from their shared perilous situation. With both his and the Admiral's ship ran aground, Philip is summoned by the Admiral to answer for the situation. He replies to the Admiral's officer: 'I do not intend to go on board and put myself in his power, that he might gratify his resentment by my ignominious death. *It is a duty that I owe these men under my command to preserve my life, that I may, if possible, preserve theirs in this strait*' (Marryat, *Phantom Ship*, 164; emphasis added). It is Philip's professional duty, in other words, to protect his crew but it is more than doing his job.

After meeting the Dutchman one sailor on Philip's ship exclaims, '[w]e shall never reach port again, sir' (Marryat, *Phantom Ship*, 195). Naturally, Philip's skill and inherent sense of duty prevents this disaster from happening. This doubling of son and father shows that the son, learning from his father's mistake, is offered the opportunity of pardoning him for it. Adherence to professional duty are mere stepping stones that allow the son to get to the same level as his father, so they have had the same experiences and they are each other's equal. Only then is Philip ready to fulfil his

Chapter 3

supernatural duty which depends on more than straightforward professionalism. Philip, representing the dutiful, professional officer, displays his worthiness of the role by showing fairness, self-sacrifice and trustworthiness. His corrupt father, who neglects his duty as captain, is clearly the inferior man. Philip's adherence to professional duty help him in his survival throughout the narrative but ultimately, Philip's sense of duty extends beyond professionalism. This marks the difference between the young Vanderdecken and his cursed father. Both have to obtain the rank of captain so it can be shown that Philip is really worthy of rescuing his father. He is a good man who does not work to ascend the professional ladder; it seems to just happen to him in such an easy way that it suggests he is a naturally gifted seaman.

This is complicated by the novel's ending. After five voyages in which Philip is seen to steadily climb the hierarchical ladder from second mate to captain, the narrative is repositioned on land. After obtaining this high rank, it seems there is no way but down. When it picks up again years after Amine's death, Philip goes to sea as an old man, embarking as a passenger (Marryat, *Phantom Ship*, 307). Rank and professionalism are abandoned, and in two short chapters Philip succeeds not only in finally dispensing with Schriften, but also absolves his father from his curse. The Dutchman's ship disintegrates and both Philip and his father are swallowed by the sea. In the strictest sense, professional duty is not the force driving Philip to save his father, instead being a means to an end. The rational nature of seafaring duty is contrasted with the irrationality of the supernatural. Rank has no place in this chaos, and is ultimately and unexpectedly insignificant.

Using the word "duty" to refer to Philip's supernatural mission solidifies the connection between the reality of the maritime world and the supernatural in *The Phantom Ship*. Marryat is not interested in a biblical reading of the Flying Dutchman. He is more fascinated by the inchoate, physical supernatural of the maritime space. This space lets him explore the supernatural through duty, or perhaps duty is the only way of exploring this supernatural space. The two interpretations are bound together in the text. Duty beyond work also becomes an element of the maritime space through Marryat's engagement.

This section has shown in more detail how Marryat's maritime supernatural novel uses

Gothic duality both as element and as motif where Philip's duty and the Dutchman's curse act as structural equivalents that drive the narrative. It has analysed instances where the supernatural occurs and how these repetitive scenes of interrupted seafaring not only add sensational excitement, but also express the novel's duality through mirroring the maritime superstitions with the landed narrative of contested religion. Joanna Mstowska sets up a discussion of one inevitable, and also Gothic, theme of *The Phantom Ship*: religious and national otherness. In the following section, I discuss the double of the maritime supernatural narrative; the religious narrative. This discussion focuses on the principal figures in this part of the novel; Amine and Poots, whose status as not-quite Others enables Marryat to explore religious tolerance.

3.2 Orientalism and Christianity

The maritime supernatural narrative in *The Phantom Ship* is doubled by a narrative about religious tolerance. This part of the novel, which comprises a significant amount of the narrative, is curiously underread in contemporary scholarship. The novel presents the Dutchman legend as a means to an end; it facilitates a discourse about different religions and religious tolerance. It calls up a dialogue about which is the true religion. The sea is continuously present in the religious narrative as a physical space. Poots escapes the Arabs by ship; Amine accompanies Philip on one of his ships which is subsequently wrecked and another ship brings her into the hands of the Portuguese inquisition in Goa. The maritime element is secondary, facilitating an exploration of the legitimacy of Catholic dogma.

Andeweg addresses the novel's end, where Philip's mission is fulfilled through the unquestionably Christian message of forgiveness (Andeweg, *Vliegende Hollander*, 39). This coda, where Philip finally forgives his long-standing enemy Schriften is strange for two reasons not discussed by Andeweg. By this point in the narrative, Philip 'was no longer the sincere Catholic that he had been; for he never thought of religion without his Amine's cruel fate being brought to his recollection' 306). One of Philip's final acts might be one of Catholic forgiveness, as Andeweg

suggests, this forgiveness is directed at one person, not at representatives of the religion responsible for his wife's death.

The novel's end is strange given the anti-Catholic discourse threaded through the narrative. The two Catholic priests, one Dutch, one Portuguese, initially appear innocuous, irritating in their persistence to convert the unwilling Amine but otherwise apparently harmless. Together they fulfil parts of the role Darryl Jones calls '[t]he sinister, manipulative monk [who] is of course the staple figure of Protestant anti-monastic literature' of eighteenth-century Gothic (Jones, *Horror*, 12). The Portuguese priest Mathias proves to be part of a grand evil Catholic machine when he betrays Amine to the Portuguese Inquisition in Goa, when Dutch Father Seysen has long since disappeared from the narrative. Both priests undertake attempts to convert Amine, Philip's young wife, to the Catholic religion. Amine, who adheres to a natural religion with Orientalist influences, actively challenges the Catholic ideas propagated by the priests and rejects their attempts to baptise her. I would like to focus on Marryat's Orientalist writing of non-Christian characters Poots and Amine, and how his engagement with the religious supernatural and Other religions helps him convey his critique on Christianity.

In his introduction to an 1896 edition of *The Phantom Ship*, Hannay criticises Marryat's use of 'supernatural elements', noting the author's failure to write them realistically: 'Why, for instance, was it necessary to make a white witch of Amine? Her witchcraft serves no visible purpose, except to get her into the clutches of the Inquisition at Goa – a purpose which it would surely have been easy enough to effect without having recourse to sorcery' (Hannay, 'Introduction', xi). In another edition published in the same year, R. B. J. similarly notes the novel's treatment of the 'philosophy of the unseen, as expounded by Amine [...] is both weak and tiresome' (R. B. J., x). Both critics note Amine's connection with the supernatural. Hannay does not explicate why he thinks the inclusion of Amine's sorcery is unnecessary. I would argue that identifying her with witchcraft pertains to her refusal to fully adhere to any mainstream religion, her otherness from Christianity. It others her. Amine embodies a religious narrative that counters Christianity which has its roots in both the supernatural, meaning non-religious witchcraft and

supernatural ability, and in non-Christian religion. Amine is in-between religions; not having been brought up in either tradition, she knows enough so she can sympathise with both. Poots, on the other hand, is the ultimate Other, an antagonistic amalgamation of non-Christian religions. His role in the narrative is distinct from Amine's; while she questions religious differences, Poots largely affirms them.

There is no question that, in his representations of the East through Poots and Amine, Marryat writes what Edward Said came to call the Orient. The Orient 'help[s] to define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience'.²¹ Said's seminal text on Western constructions of the East shows that the 'relationship between Occident and Orient is a relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony' (Said, 5). It is inevitable that I turn to it here. However, I do not mean to show *The Phantom Ship* is a mere deviation from Said's thesis, nor that it creates a *simple* counternarrative. The counternarrative it creates is multi-layered and complex. Poots and Amine, whether by their actions or their words, are seen to be emphatically not European. They resemble the Oriental other 'that conform[s] to the dichotomy between "our" space (safe and civilized) and "their" space (dangerous and uncivilized)'.²² Rather than conform to this dichotomy, however, they disturb it.

There is an implied foreignness to Poots, although his exact background is unknown. He is introduced as the doctor in Philip's village, 'a little, miserable, avaricious wretch, but known to be very skilful in his profession' (Marryat, *Phantom Ship*, 4). He 'sp[ea]ks the language but imperfectly', which implies he is not Dutch (Marryat, *Phantom Ship*, 4). The name Poots, however, does not reveal his origins.²³ The impossibility of placing Poots' origins disconnects him from a particular place, making him a perceived threat to the natives. Amine reveals more about her father; 'when a lad on board of a trading vessel, [he] was taken by the Moors, and sold as a slave to a [physician] of their country. Finding him very intelligent, the Moor brought him up as an assistant,

²¹ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (London: Routledge, 1978), p. 1.

²² Mildred Mortimer, 'Re-Presenting the Orient: A New Instructional Approach', *The French Review*, 79 (2005), 296–312; p. 302.

²³ 'Poots Family History' on <<http://www.ancestry.co.uk/name-origin?surname=poots>> [8 January 2016]

and it was under this man that he obtained a knowledge of the art' (Marryat, *Phantom Ship*, 41). Amine believes her father 'holds no faith whatever: at least he hath taught me none. His god is gold' (Marryat, *Phantom Ship*, 41). Poots' fear of the Father Seysen ('Mynheer Poots [...] darted out of the room the instant he perceived Father Seysen' [Marryat, *Phantom Ship*, 47]) is perhaps absurd, his being 'skilled in the Eastern knowledge' and 'dabbl[ing] in the occult sciences' all indicate that semi-Oriental otherness is equated with evil (Marryat, *Phantom Ship*, 92; 97). Poots intends to become as rich as his master and 'he became a follower of Mahomet after which he was free, and practised for himself' (Marryat, *Phantom Ship*, 42). In an unsubtle and expected turn of poetic justice, Poots eventually accidentally kills himself by drinking poisoned wine he made for Philip.

Poots' defining characteristic is his greed but his characterisation as a Muslim, practising or not, is more interesting here. He resembles Vanessa Smith's beachcomber as described in her 2005 *Literary Culture and the Pacific*. Smith, considering early-nineteenth-century texts on encounters between East and West in the Pacific, describes beachcombers as white people who 'went native'. These 'escaped convicts, deserted sailors or itinerant traders', assuming native, in Smith's case Pacific islanders', dress or habits, were both representative of European culture to Pacific societies as vice versa.²⁴ The public perceived them unsympathetically, seeing both beachcombers and Pacific islanders as ape-like degenerates (Smith, 18–20). Poots can be seen as a returned beachcomber who cannot (or refuses to) unlearn his new ways and reassimilate into Western society. Going native meant a way to freedom, showing his reasons for following the Islamic faith lack true conviction, and upon his return is seen as untrustworthy and other. Although the beachcomber as Gothic villain is perhaps odd, it is this kind of curious parallel that is missed when Marryat's text is either under- or over-read.

Poots plays the role of typical Gothic villain, characterised by evil with no redemptive qualities, fixed on obtaining Philip's possessions and unscrupulously disregarding his duties and

²⁴ Vanessa Smith, *Literary Culture and the Pacific: Nineteenth-Century Textual Encounters* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 18–19.

obligations as the village doctor. He is uncompromisingly evil; he is motivated by financial gain only and is ruthless in his pursuit. In a 2013 article, Alyce von Rothkirch asserts the nineteenth-century literary villain

was a figure both entertaining and shocking, an embodiment of socio-cultural fears which had to be contained or eliminated, and an example of the way in which writers employed stereotypes to achieve the greatest possible effect within the narrow scope of the short-story form – narrow, that is, when compared with the novel, in which the motivations of villains can be explored in more detail.²⁵

Poots embodies the fear of an Oriental other whose stereotypical characteristics reinforce his alienness. Although he has space in his novel, Marryat does not detail the motivations of his villain: Poots is there to *be there*, antagonistic for the sake of having an antagonist. This does not make him more frightening – he is evil for the sake of having an evil character in the narrative, not for the sake of being evil.

Marryat writes a version of the East that suggests misappropriation of Eastern culture inevitably ends badly. His attempts to obtain Philip's wealth ultimately mean Poots' end: he accidentally kills himself by drinking poisoned wine he made for Philip. Otherness is used by Marryat to emphasise evil in his character; Poots is not evil because he becomes Muslim, but he becomes Muslim because it is an opportunist move that does not come from conviction. He adheres to a religion for the wrong reasons, and is ultimately punished (Marryat, *Phantom Ship*, 94–95). Poots, the converted Westerner, becomes the Other that invades the civilised space of the West. Marryat's mixing of stereotypical depiction of religious caricature implies what he calls 'a follower of Mahomet' really denotes a generic, uncanny religious otherness (Marryat, *Phantom Ship*, 42). While there is anxiety with Christian characters that Poots leads an irreligious life, this narrative of religious anxiety is later overridden (overwritten) by Amine's particular non-religiousness, solving the duality Marryat introduces through Poots.

²⁵ Alyce von Rothkirch, "His face was livid, dreadful, with a foam at the corners of his mouth': A Typology of Villains in Classic Detective Stories", *The Modern Language Review*, 108 (2013), 1042–63; p. 1043.

Amine is a more refined character than Poots, but not less problematic. Through her, Marryat uses Orientalist conventions to expose contrastive thoughts within the Catholic dogma and show its problematic sides. Amine is half-Westerner, half-Eastern; her mother is from 'an Arab family', otherwise unspecified (Marryat, *Phantom Ship*, 42). Her appearance confirms her otherness; her dress is 'very different from that usually worn by the young women of the district. Not only her features but her dress would at once have indicated to a traveller that she was of Arab blood, as was the fact' (Marryat, *Phantom Ship*, 31). Amine's unspecified yet clear difference is most clear in her religious opinions. Initially, the religious discourse in *The Phantom Ship* is focused on understanding the creed, and arguing for, if not religious diversity, at least religious tolerance. In one discussion between Father Mathias and Amine, the following exchange takes place:

"I called upon my own mother, who is in the land of spirits, good father," replied Amine. "Yes; but as an infidel; not, I fear, in the land of the blessed spirits, my child."
"She hardly will be punished for following the creed of her fathers, *living where she did, where no other creed was known?*" replied Amine indignantly. "If the good on earth are blessed in the next world – if she had, as you assert she had, a soul to be saved – an immortal spirit – He who made that spirit will not destroy it because she worshipped as her fathers did. – Her life was good: *why should she be punished for ignorance of that creed which she never had an opportunity of rejecting?*" (Marryat, *Phantom Ship*, 175; emphasis added).

Amine points out that it would be ludicrous if her mother and others like her would automatically go to hell just because they have never heard of the Christian God. This is a legitimate question but the priest has no satisfying answer. Mathias simply replies that the will of Heaven is not to be opposed, and that she should be grateful for this opportunity to 'be received into the bosom of the Holy Church' (Marryat, *Phantom Ship*, 177). In another instance, Amine and Philip discuss Amine's witchcraft. Philip tells her it is godless and needs to stop. Amine's retort is again a sensible one; '[i]f that act be unholy, Philip, so is your mission. You would deal and co-operate with the spirits of another world – I would do no more' (Marryat, *Phantom Ship*, 179). Amine's practices do not fit with the rules of the Church because the Church has made the rules so that witchcraft is not permitted. Marryat points out the irony of this, challenging the hegemony of the Catholic Church by posing questions through Amine that have yet remained unanswered. Exposing what he sees as

insurmountable contradictions in religious discourse, Marryat engages a provocative debate about religious practice and depiction.

Later in the novel, the discourse moves onto bad practises and behaviour of Christians themselves. Rather than express them in the excessive terms of the Gothic, however, Marryat appeals to the reader's sense of reason. Amine's attitude towards Christianity becomes more negative when the raft she is on after a shipwreck is cut adrift by the careless, mutinous crew. She complains

And these are Christians! The creed that the old priests would have had me – yes! that Philip would have had me embrace. Charity and good-will! They talk of it, but I have never seen them practise it! Loving one another! – forgiving one another! – say rather hating and preying upon one another! A creed never practised: why, if not practised, of what value is it? (Marryat, *Phantom Ship*, 209).

More parallels are drawn between Christianity and other beliefs, this time related with more derision. When she is eventually saved, restored to health by a New Guinean tribe, she is put on a ship to Goa which is caught in a storm: 'the superstitious seamen lighted candles before the small image of the saint which was shrined on deck. Amine observed it, and smiled with scorn [...] "*The Papooses I have just left do no worse than worship their idols, and are termed idolaters* [...] [w]hat then are these Christians?"' (Marryat, *Phantom Ship*, 225; emphasis added). Again, Father Mathias, who has curiously found his way on the same ship, cannot give a meaningful reply.

The New Guinean tribe is depicted in unequivocally racist terms. Despite Amine's later defence of their habits quoted above, they are initially described as having hair 'woolly in its texture', filling Amine with 'disgust' (Marryat, *Phantom Ship*, 222).²⁶ They are later described as 'disgusting' and 'wholly unintelligible', although Amine is nevertheless grateful for their help (Marryat, *Phantom Ship*, 222). This tribe has no voice of its own; indeed, its people do not utter a

²⁶ Note Angela Rosenthal's comment on eighteenth-century perception of hair in her 2004 article 'Raising Hair': 'it also was perceived as registering ethnic divides, separating the controlled hair of the "superior" European from, on the one hand, the alleged unkempt hairiness of Africans, or, on the other hand, the "beardless" men of the Americas and Asia' (Angela Rosenthal, 'Raising Hair' in *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, (2004), p. 1.

single word in any language. Their appearance lasts for about a page, but the episode is telling of the perception of indigenous tribes as extremely other. They are not dangerous, however; unlike Poots, who is uncomfortably close to being Western, the tribespeople are described in animalistic terms, different, but not dangerous. This suggests different levels of otherness, where some Other characters are closer to the Western, white self, and therefore a greater threat than those Other characters whose existence does not endanger the parameters of white selfhood.

There is a link between the religious and the colonial narratives in their representations of otherness. Clare Bradford addresses the potential clash between Christian discourse and colonial discourse within a single literary text, particularly in children's literature. While Christian discourse promotes equality of all men before God, colonial discourse 'promotes the superiority of white over colored peoples, and so validates the appropriation of land.'²⁷ Fiction attempts to depict indigenous people as extreme others that need to be converted to Christianity and thereby become civilised, but because of their extreme otherness it seems impossible this can happen. *The Phantom Ship* puts forward a different argument. By showing their habits are very similar to ours, Marryat suggests that the Christian discourse does not need to clash with the colonial discourse. The tribespeople are excluded from this, however. Different gradations of otherness are at play. Amine is depicted as not-quite Dutch, not-quite other, but she is still more Western than these tribespeople. The character of Amine shows there is no need to fear the colonial other will start resembling the colonising self too much. While, on the one side they are 'disgusting' and 'unintelligible', on the other side they already have similar, and just as honourable, habits as the coloniser does in the West.

Smith uses the phrase 'hierarchy of otherness' to differentiate between Polynesian priests and those Pacific islanders they are trying to convert (Smith, 83). These 'licensed other[s]' were 'trusted to bear the authorised Christian message' and prepare the Pacific islanders for the Western missionaries (Smith, 81). The phrases "hierarchy of otherness" and "licensed other" are

²⁷ Clare Bradford, 'The End of Empire? Colonial and Postcolonial Journeys in Children's Books', *Children's Literature*, 29 (2001), 196–218; p. 197.

evocative of Western and yet exotic, not-quite Other Amine who is able to give a voice to those with whom a Western priest (and, by extension, Western reader) is unable to speak directly. The indigenous people do not have a common language with us, so, like the Polynesian priests, Amine acts as an intermediary to convey one party's ideas to the other. Unlike Smith's licensed other, the Polynesian priest who translates Christian notions about religion into an indigenous language or context, Amine manages to convey indigenous ideas about religion to a Western context. By overturning the missionary framework, Amine teaches the Western priest (and reader) about the fallacies in his dogma.

Ultimately, Amine's defiance proves futile and fatal. She summons a vision of Philip through her witchcraft, but is discovered by Father Mathias and several of the neighbours. Although she maintains her counternarrative until the end – her last words to Mathias are 'Leave me, *I die in the faith of my forefathers*, and scorn a creed that warrants such a scene as this', Amine is not rewarded for her defiance (Marryat, *Phantom Ship*, 305). Marryat shows that questioning Christianity is dangerous, but that does not automatically legitimise or justify its hegemony. Amine is depicted as a heroine, a martyr who dies for her beliefs. This is echoed in the final words that are used to describe Amine: 'once peerless and high-minded', emphasising her strong moral principles and singularity (Marryat, *Phantom Ship*, 305). Hannay finds that the end is the novel's 'one undoubted artistic merit', since

the catastrophe is reached in quite the best way is more than an admirer need maintain, but that Amine and Philip Vanderdecken were doomed to end unhappily is undeniable; and it is to Marryat's credit as an artist that he saw this, and would not flatter the sentimental reader by flying in the face of necessity (Hannay, 'Introduction', xv).

This sense of inevitable necessity, when applied to the religious narrative embodied by Amine, seems to undermine the idea of emancipated Orientalists. It seems that any counternarrative is doomed to fail.

Amine's end is inconsistent with the usual Gothic trial scene where 'the truth finally triumphs over falsehood and casuistry' (Jones, *Horror*, 13). Amine, who is presented as both the

voice of sober-headed reason as well as the victim of Catholic attempts to convert and ultimately prosecute her, does not emerge triumphant from the narrative. Her punishment is disproportionate to her purported crime; burned at the stake for witchcraft, 'only when the burning embers covered the ground, a few fragments of bones hanging on the chain were all that remained' of her (Marryat, *Phantom Ship*, 305). This end is a return to the excessive Gothic punishment rather than the triumph of the heroine over the evil power of the Catholic Church. She is completely eradicated, much like Philip and his father will be after the curse is lifted and they disappear into the ocean (Marryat, *Phantom Ship*, 315–16). Another instance of duality, the complete destruction of the principal characters is presented as either a punishment, or in the case of Philip and his father, an inevitable but longed-for end.

Amine does not adhere the 'model of the Oriental woman' as outlined by Said (Said, 6). Describing Gustave Flaubert's meeting with an Egyptian courtesan, Said's Oriental woman is characterised by a lack of agency: 'she never spoke of herself, she never represented her emotions, presence, or history. *He* spoke for her and represented her. He was foreign, comparatively wealthy, male, and these were historical facts of domination that allowed him not only to possess [her] physically but to speak for her and tell his readers in what way she was "typically Oriental"' (Said, 6). Amine, however, is one character in *The Phantom Ship* who possesses agency to act of her own will, her ability to act undeterred by the maritime supernatural. Marryat conforms to this model in the sense that he is a Western man writing an Oriental, or semi-Oriental, woman. Her voice is necessarily his voice because she is his invention, but at the same time, this voice is not speaking in a way that is typically Oriental. Through Amine, Marryat questions various expressions of Christianity and gives his judgment of them, and through this, enables the Oriental or semi-Oriental woman to speak for herself.

Dorothy Kelly, writing about the exotic female counternarrative in Honoré de Balzac's early-nineteenth-century writing, shows that

Said [...] claimed not only that the Orient was feminized, but also that this Oriental feminine other was connected to troubling elements *in the Western world itself*, namely women in this case: "The Oriental was linked thus to elements in Western society (delinquents, the

insane, women, the poor) having in common an identity best described as lamentably alien" ("Orientalism" 207). [Balzac's semi-exotic women] provide a half-way point between the threatening other and the Parisian/white woman. These two women [characters in Balzac's work] thus act not only as a locus of fears about the exotic and racialized other, but also more generally as the locus of fears about the otherness of woman herself.²⁸

Amine, however, is not sexualised and her gender seems almost irrelevant. The fact that she is a woman is never emphasised in the context of her religious arguments. She is a woman when it is relevant to the adventure plot; her need of physical rescue is an incentive for Philip to act. Throughout the discussions about religion, Amine is not explicitly described as feminine. She is a wife, not a courtesan or prostitute, and she does not represent the dangerous woman. She does not seduce. Described as 'angelic', Amine 'appeared calm and resolute' despite the danger she is in (Marryat, *Phantom Ship*, 17). She is described as having a 'beautifully-formed head', with dark yet soft eyes (Marryat, *Phantom Ship*, 17). There is no trace of Balzac's Oriental courtesans, who are described as 'feline', in need of being tamed (Kelly, 10). Amine is expressly written as innocent and kind, rather than exotic and dangerous. When she comes on board Philip's ship to sail along as the captain's wife, there is no protest or implication that she might endanger the voyage. She embodies duality in yet another sense; between the exotic other and domestic self, but more than that, she represents the half-way point between accepting Western religion and the temptation of exotic, other religions.

This question of letting the Oriental speak for herself has preoccupied many scholars that have written replies to Said's 1978 text. It is particularly the subject-object binary that I would like to address here. Dennis Porter, looking at Orientalism in 1983 in the context of travel literature, argues that 'although Said claims that what interest him as a scholar is the detail and that he intends to be attentive to individual voices, virtually no counter-hegemonic voices are heard'.²⁹ He shows that T.E. Lawrence's *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* (1922) show the author as both the

²⁸ Dorothy Kelly, 'Balzac's Disorienting Orientalism: "Une Passion dans le désert"', *Nineteenth-Century French Studies*, 40.1-2 (2011-2012), 1-17; pp. 12-3.

²⁹ Dennis Porter, 'Orientalism and its Problems' in *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader* eds. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 150-61; pp. 152-53.

embodiment of British imperialism as well as sympathising with the Arab culture and estrangement from his own culture (Porter, 157). Lawrence, perhaps more so than Marryat, was an upper-middleclass white Englishman, and the counternarratives they produce are always influenced by their privileged backgrounds. In other words, even if *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* expresses sympathy with the East, it still articulates this sympathy from a Western point of view. Marryat, unlike Lawrence, voices his narrative through a semi-Orientalist character, Amine, and attempts to legitimise it by making her half-us, half-them. The countervoice is more explicit than in Lawrence's work. Doing this, it seems, assures him her voice will be heard; her Western side makes her more familiar and her Eastern side gives her authority. Anthropologist Michael Richardson noted a similar flaw in Said's thesis in 1990 when he criticised Said's denial of a relationship of 'reciprocity between subject and object'.³⁰ Richardson notes that

His argument rather stands or falls on his denial of such a reciprocal relationship. Orientalism was imposed upon the Orient: it was a European project, more or less consciously elaborated, in which Orientalists were nothing but passive pawns. Whether or not Orientalist representations were accurate or not thereby becomes somewhat irrelevant [...] since the object has no real existence, being only a conceptualization of the subject's mind, it can never be a question of the former acting upon the latter (Richardson, 17).

Richardson views the matter of countervoice differently from Porter. While Porter shows that, despite Said's claims that all knowledge that exists is doctored in some way, true truth can exist because there is such a thing as a representation of the truth. This implies 'that there is perhaps a "real" and consequently knowable Orient' (Porter, 151). Richardson argues that according to Said's parameters, finding the true truth is impossible because it simply does not exist, not even by implication. This way, the East will never have a counterargument in Western literature because it is an invention of the West, and it is unlikely that the West will argue against its own depictions of the East, or, for that matter of the West. The only solution, in Richardson's eyes, 'is for the subject to develop representations of the object that would represent the object more faithfully'

³⁰ Marcus Richardson, 'Enough Said: Reflections on *Orientalism*', *Anthropology Today*, 6 (1990), 16–19; p. 17.

(Richardson, 17). This emancipation of the object would make it a subject itself, a subject that can gaze back and question Western hegemony. Rather than find the countervoice in existing literature, Richardson argues for the arrival of a new body of literature that creates counter-arguments against existing work in its own right.

Amine's God '[i]s the God who made this beautiful world, and all which it contains – the God of nature – name him as you will [...] there are so many faiths, but surely they must be but different paths leading alike to heaven' (Marryat, *Phantom Ship*, 42). She actively rejects the Christian religion and while she does not substitute it with a traditional Oriental religion, *by* rejecting Christianity she becomes the non-Western, non-Christian Other. Amine, then, is a semi-Orientalist woman, Orientalist in the Saidian sense of the word meaning written by the white European male, but in speaking out becomes semi; she becomes subject, not object, of a gaze that is pointed towards the Western self.

The Phantom Ship is a text that is both over-read as well as under-read. The landed narrative of Oriental and religious otherness is often ignored in contemporary scholarship. This is curious, because it brings to the fore an interaction between worlds that is more supple and porous than Marryat's writing seems to allow, or has been given credit for. His unequivocally racist description of the New Guinean tribe is distressing for readers now, but it brings to the fore Amine who is an in-between figure, a mediator between East and West. The maritime supernatural narrative in turn is often over-read, and given intricate theological readings that are not supported by the actual text. Ambivalence abounds: there is ambivalence around duty, around Amine, who is not particularly feminine in reductive ways. The convergence of these ambivalent elements only emerge when Marryat's text is considered on its own material terms.

3.3 'Here in these cruder books we get closer to the art of fiction'³¹

The Phantom Ship contains a typical maritime supernatural tale. Marryat's interpretation of the Dutchman legend consolidates previous versions, and the author's main concern seems to have been to appeal to the taste of the reading public, producing pages of unchallenging maritime supernatural fiction. The Dutchman appears in all possible ways and his individual apparitions have all possible consequences. Although it is difficult to say whether the conventionality of these apparitions is due to the dissemination of Marryat's popular and widely read novel into the public consciousness, or whether his version conform ideas of the maritime supernatural because he condensed preceding versions into one single novel, the fact remains that Marryat's spectral ship is exactly that: a physical manifestation of a particular maritime superstition that represents itself.

The novel also contains a land-based narrative which voices questions about the legitimacy of Christianity. Through Other and semi-Other Orientalist characters, Marryat addresses the discrepancy between Biblical prescriptions of Christian life and daily practice. Amine in particular provides an Orientalist – but not particularly feminist – countervoice to the predominance of Christianity. Her Oriental, generically Other religion counterbalances the maritime superstition as a landed alternative to Catholic dogma. The two narratives are drawn together with Gothic themes draw the maritime supernatural and the religious narratives together. The inconsistencies of Marryat's interpretation of the Gothic – the mixed national and religious identities, usually so sharply separated in Gothic fiction – support a reading of *The Phantom Ship* as a call for unity, religious understanding and reasonable debate.

Woolf has suggested that books like *The Phantom Ship*, 'these cruder books', bring the reader closer to the art of fiction – the practical application of knowledge into an accessible novelised yarn (Woolf, 43). This application ranges from the use of recognisable themes from a myriad of literary and non-literary genres to the use of plain sailor speech. A true sailor, Marryat writes unsubtly and certainly not metaphorically; by separating the religious discussion from the

³¹ Virginia Woolf, 'The Captain's Deathbed', 1935, p. 43.

maritime space, he attempts to make sure there is no misinterpretation of his narrative. Yet, ironically, many interpretations of the novel exist; it appears as though maritime supernatural fiction cannot (or no longer) be taken for what it is. This chapter has argued that *The Phantom Ship*, at least, unequivocally represents the maritime supernatural as itself. The Dutchman does not embody a crisis of modernity but instead facilitates an interrogation of crises of religion elsewhere. This is a valuable insight for the hypothesis that most nineteenth-century maritime fiction is based on experience, attempting to relate real life at sea. As later chapters will show, the maritime supernatural develops over the course of the nineteenth century, taking forward the maritime supernatural popularised by Marryat to respond to the evolving experiences of the sea.

Marryat's maritime supernatural is not nostalgic for a lost age of sail. At the time of his writing, seafaring had not changed to the extent it would in the decades after Marryat's death in the 1840s. *The Phantom Ship* was begun as the Victorian era started, a period in British history that was to be marked by its incredible technological progress and expansion over the globe. The supernatural lure of the sea temporarily gave way to landed concerns of industrialisation and changes in infrastructure. The following chapter demonstrates the relationship between the mid-nineteenth-century abandonment of the maritime supernatural, industrialisation on land and sea and the ramifications for the late-nineteenth-century literary return to the sea.

Chapter 4: The maritime supernatural in the mid-nineteenth century.

After Frederick Marryat's death in 1848, no new British sailor-author emerged on the nineteenth-century literary scene until William Clark Russell, whose first and possibly most successful maritime novel *The Wreck of the "Grosvenor"* was published in 1877.¹ In 1894, Russell wrote about his experience of writing and publishing *The Wreck of the "Grosvenor"* in the collection *My First Book*, and addresses the curious absence of maritime fiction in the middle decades of the nineteenth century. Russell notes how, before him

Only two writers had dealt with the mercantile side of ocean life – Dana, the author of *Two Years before the Mast* and Herman Melville, both of them, it is needless to say, Americans. I could not recollect [such] a book written by an Englishman [...]. I could recall no author who, himself a practical seaman, one who had slept with sailors, eaten with them, gone aloft with them, and suffered with them, had produced a book, a novel – call it what you will – wholly based on what I may term the inner life of the forecastle and the cabin.²

As a result, the subgenre of maritime supernatural fiction was temporarily abandoned too. It was to be revived by Russell in the 1880s, and remythologised by William Hope Hodgson in the early-twentieth century. The last pre-gap publication that used the Dutchman legend as its base is James Malcolm Rymer's 1851 *Vanderdecken; or the Flying Dutchman: A Romance of the Ocean*. Rymer, a popular mid-nineteenth century author, was not a sailor and as such his Flying Dutchman-narrative is not informed by the author's experience with or socio-political interest in the maritime world. Its landed setting and preoccupation with love relationships associate it with popular sensation fiction rather than with maritime adventure fiction.

¹ John Sutherland, *The Stanford Companion to Victorian Literature* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989), p. 681.

² William Clark Russell, 'The Wreck of the "Grosvenor"' in *My First Book* ed. Jerome K. Jerome 1894 (London: Chatto and Windus, 1897), 29–41; p. 33.

Post-gap maritime literature is characterised by its nostalgia for the age of sail, and the supernatural itself becomes a more prominent element of the maritime supernatural rather than acting as context in which landed concerns can be explored. Instead, anxiety emanates from the sea and shipboard life itself. This short chapter will tentatively suggest possible reasons for the temporary abandonment of maritime fiction in the middle of the nineteenth century, and aims to demonstrate how changes in global infrastructure potentially influence imaginations of and responses to the ocean.

4.1 Industrialisation and literature

The mid-nineteenth-century decades have been called ‘the formative years of the Victorian state’.³ Landed working-class labourers are usually the focus of academic as well as contemporary Victorian debates and analyses. Seen as a threat to the stability of British life, they were physically pushed to the margins of society and housed in inadequate spaces, but simultaneously dragged into the spotlight in order to be thoroughly examined.⁴ Maritime labourers are rarely mentioned in studies of Victorian industrialisation, although they too experienced technological progress. The agricultural sector was Britain’s largest employer before the industrial revolution and changes that affected them were most evidently felt and witnessed in literature and non-fictional writing at the time (Hopkins, 3). It is perhaps no wonder, then, that the literary gaze turned towards factories and hamlets, city and countryside, and chronicled the inhabitants’ exploitation, welfare and (mis)adventures. Focused on ‘political reform, urbanization, free trade, technological development, religious activism and intermittent class conflict’, and despite its imperial ambition and expansion,

³ Eric Hopkins, *Industrialisation and Society: A Social History, 1830-1951* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), p. 21.

⁴ Joseph W. Childers, ‘Industrial Culture and the Victorian Novel’ in *The Cambridge Companion to the Victorian Novel* ed. Deirdre David (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 77–96; p. 78.

Victorian society was remarkably domestic.⁵

This domesticity was disturbed by spectres that emerged during séances in Victorian drawing rooms. Spiritualism embodied the prevalent sense that the supernatural ‘was both fearful and terrible and ardently desired; it was a spooky sense that there was more to the world than the everyday, and an intimation that reality might be transfigured by something above and beyond’.⁶ Current academic studies of spiritualism show it entered into nearly all aspects of Victorian life, having been studied in both a national and international context, in terms of gender, class and as reaction to ‘the general decline in the authority of orthodox Christianity and, more specifically, as a response to the so-called “Victorian crisis of faith” provoked by Biblical criticism and Darwinism’ (Lamont, 898). The supernatural disturbed the middle-class everyday domesticity of Victorian society.

The British literary scene of the mid-nineteenth century was dominated by the Condition of England novel concerned with addressing the problems arising from industrialisation and urbanization. Authors explored the implications of industrial progress on daily life, chronicling the prosperity or decline that came with industrial changes, so that a ‘neat separation of industrialism and the novel is nearly impossible’ for the mid-nineteenth-century decades (Childers, 77–78). Childers notes that there pervaded a sense that the middle and upper classes needed to know, from a moral standpoint, about the working classes, and novels were informed by parliamentary reports in order to represent them as truthfully as possible (Childers, 78).

That is not to say that the sea disappeared completely from the global literary scene in the mid-nineteenth-century decades. Most famously, now at least, Herman Melville wrote about the sea after his maritime career ended, with his popular *Typee* published in 1846 and his seminal but barely-read *Moby-Dick* in 1851. In British fiction, the sea did not completely disappear but it occurs

⁵ Edward M. Spiers, ‘War’ in *The Cambridge Companion to Victorian Culture* ed. Francis O’Gorman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 80–100; p. 80.

⁶ Nicola Brown, Carolyn Burdett and Pamela Thurschwell, ‘Introduction’ in *The Victorian Supernatural*, eds. Nicola Brown, Carolyn Burdett and Pamela Thurschwell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2004), 1–19; p. 1.

in the background; instead of driving the narrative logic it becomes a backdrop against which the narrative events are played out. Both John Peck and Margaret Cohen, in their respective studies of maritime literature, note how maritime fiction underwent significant changes mid-century.

Peck notes how the Royal Navy entered a 'settled state of affairs' in the middle decades of the nineteenth century, and that 'it is not surprising that stories focusing on naval conflict are less than central in the mid-Victorian novel' (Peck, 127). Peck discusses Elizabeth Gaskell's *Sylvia's Lovers* (1863), showing that when it is 'read simply as a romantic novel, *Sylvia's Lovers* seems to be just the kind of work that we might expect to be published in the 1860s, when the country appears to be stable, prosperous and speaking with one voice; in a spirit of nostalgia, a novelist from a settled era recalls a more romantic past [...]. What Gaskell really shows, however, is the instability behind the confident face of Victorian Britain' (Peck, 132). He argues that

The whaling community of Monkshaven provides an ideal focus for Gaskell because the political, social and ethical concerns that dominate her novels – concerns about establishing an acceptable relationship between the individual and the state in a society where it is a priority that business must flourish – are, at this time, all reflected in the tensions that can be perceived in maritime activity (Peck, 134).

The maritime setting of this narrative reflects landed concerns. This practice is not new to the 1860s, but Peck suggests it became more widely adopted. The ship and the maritime environment are readily and gratefully identified as microcosms standing in for society as a whole. Peck argues that Gaskell's unsentimental novel contrasts the 1860 ideal of sailor-as-gentleman with her characterisation of the late-eighteenth-century sailor as a hardened, uncompromising and unfeeling individual. The figure of the gentlemanly sailor is in line with the mid-Victorian obsession with chivalry, and the Victorian officer was attributed 'the qualities of bravery, loyalty and courtesy, and endowed with a sense of honour, duty, mercy and *noblesse oblige* towards women and social inferiors' (Spiers, 83). The novel 'reminds us of the importance of the contribution of such rough characters as Kinraid in the evolution of Victorian Britain' (Peck, 137). The connection between 1860s Britain and Gaskell's fictional eighteenth-century Monkshaven becomes evident from Peck's analysis which characterises the novel as 'an energetic defence of the liberal market economy of

nineteenth-century Britain' (Peck, 132).

The second half of Peck's chapter continues on the theme of gentlemanly sailors, and focuses on writings of the gentleman-as-sailor. Authors such as Anthony Trollope, Wilkie Collins, and George Eliot featured land-based characters who did not know the sea professionally. In their writings about the sea they 'are less prepared to acknowledge those who have created the country's wealth. When they write about the sea and sailors they distance themselves from the physical reality of such a life [...]. The sea, it would appear is now little more than a rich man's playground' (Peck, 139). Peck evidences the absence of seafaring tales based on the real-life experience of sailing by bringing to the fore narratives that featured yachting and sailing for pleasure. The age of discovery, Peck suggests, had apparently ended. The gentrification of the sea is certainly an important phenomenon, but Peck overlooks post-1880s maritime literature where the sea is reclaimed by sailor-authors.

Peck is not alone in failing to acknowledge a certain continuity in depictions of maritime craft. Cohen, in a parallel argument, perceives the replacement of craft by metaphysical quest in the mid-1800s. She argues that, as steam and automation were introduced to shipping in the course of the nineteenth century, the significance of maritime craft diminished. Authors reworked the maritime fiction genre to speculate on questions of the human psyche rather than focus solely on the physical world of seafaring labour. Seafaring in maritime fiction came to stand for something more than the physical ship, sailors, ropes and tackles, and came to represent aspects of the human experience (Cohen, *Novel*, 180). It is not the case, however, that craft is simply completely replaced by the metaphysical; rather, it persists, and is complicated by industrialisation. In a single chapter, Cohen considers *Moby-Dick* (1851), Victor Hugo's *Travailleurs de la Mer* (1866) and Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1899) and shows how in each of these hugely important narratives the sea is used to say something about humanity. Her discussion is restricted to this single subject, so focused on mapping a shift in tenor that she is not attentive to continuities with older literary traditions.

Cohen begins by considering two readings of *Moby-Dick*, in which she identifies two separate

books. The first is about whaling, a subject that ‘lay professional, rather than psychological claim to our interest’ (Cohen, *Novel*, 185). The second involves ‘Melville’s remarkable poetics [which] transgress poetic and generic expectation’ (Cohen, *Novel*, 186). Aside from the whaling voyage-narrative, *Moby-Dick*’s ‘conceptual and rhetorical transgression is a metaphysical voyage, more specifically, whose mission is to explore, in the words of Richard Brodhead, “the state of the world and our place in it”’ (Cohen, *Novel*, 186).⁷ The language of the novel, not necessarily its subject matter, is innovative. Yet, Melville, as a sailor-author, is still the knowledgeable narrator who has had direct professional experience with his subject matter. Whaling, or seafaring labour more generally, still plays a vital part in this maritime narrative but in critical analyses becomes clearly overshadowed by the novel’s poetic language and its reflections on the psychology of the human experience.

She moves on to discuss Victor Hugo’s *Travailleurs de la Mer* (1866). Hugo, not a professional sailor himself, ‘unified his novels about the urban proletariat with his depiction of work at sea’ (Cohen, *Novel*, 190). Similar to her discussion of *Moby-Dick*, in her analysis of *Travailleurs de la Mer* Cohen identifies multiple books in one. She chooses to focus on two that are very similar to the ones she discusses for *Moby-Dick*: ‘the centrepiece of the novel recounting a great deed of craft and Hugo’s transformation of it into a modernist exploration into the dynamism of poetic imagery’ (Cohen, *Novel*, 190–91). Hugo, she argues, like Melville before him, wrote of professional seamanship *and* of human psychology. Hugo ‘transforms the *physis* [of sea creatures and features] into a figure of the imagination – not the pragmatic imagination of the mariner, but rather the phantasmagorical imagination of the poet’ (Cohen, *Novel*, 196).

Cohen’s discussion of Conrad’s ‘psychopathology of everyday life on board ship’ drives home her point that maritime literature came to represent more than the physical act of seafaring and maritime craft from the 1850s onwards (Cohen, *Novel*, 204). There is an issue with temporalities here, which Cohen does not address. She suggests a moment of change, a certain ‘routinization of

⁷ Cohen quotes Richard Brodhead, ‘Introduction’ in *New Essays on Moby-Dick* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 5.

the sea', but it is unclear when this moment exactly takes place, and whether it even can be called a moment if it is spread over most of the nineteenth century (Cohen, *Novel*, 179). Cohen places Conrad in her discussion of mid-nineteenth-century sea fiction because of his nostalgia for the age of sail, although his maritime and writing careers take place several decades after Melville's and Hugo's. The fact that he wrote decades after Melville and Hugo means Conrad is not part of the same mid-nineteenth-century moment of change in maritime fiction. He is haunted by it, influenced by its poetics and ability to say more about the sea than the actual seafaring.

From Cohen's discussion of mid-nineteenth-century sea fiction, it emerges that the genre was not thriving between 1850 and 1880, but the small number of narratives that were published display significant changes in style and narrative focus, where the metaphysical ultimately dominates the realist maritime narrative. The visceral maritime supernatural seems to have left the literary scene. Peck does not mention the supernatural in his analysis, showing instead how mid-Victorian literature reflected Britain entering a state of relative economic stability despite discomfort about swift industrial progress both in Britain and abroad (Peck, 138). Cohen, on the other hand, in discussing *Moby-Dick* in particular, nudges towards a kind of implied supernaturalness that goes beyond a tangible experience. The ghosts that haunt *Moby-Dick* are not real ghosts. Haunting happens metaphorically, not literally. The horror of maritime craft returns with Russell and Hodgson, however, a return curiously unaddressed by both Peck and Cohen.

The sea also featured in another popular mid-nineteenth-century genre: children's literature, particularly boys' adventure stories. Again written by authors who were no professional sailors, these narratives often feature the sea as a place of adventure and enterprise, enforcing on their young readers 'duty and rightmindedness', and prepare them for ruling the British Empire.⁸ Joseph Bristow has suggested Victorian boys' fiction was a 'popular form of improving respectability among both working- and middle-classes' and 'accommodated excesses of violence

⁸ Susan Naramore Maher, 'Recasting Crusoe: Frederick Marryat, R.M. Ballantyne and the Nineteenth-Century Robinsonade', *Children's Literature Association Quarterly*, 13 (1988), 169–75, p. 170.

and imperialist materialism at an acceptable level'.⁹ Several novels by R.M. Ballantyne, for example, whose literary career began in the 1850s, featured the maritime space as a place where shipwreck, pirates and impressment are invariably overcome, and from where the young protagonists emerge ready to take charge of islands and empires.¹⁰ The sea experience transforms the protagonists, but is not the driving force behind the narrative. Boys do not go to sea for seafaring's own sake, but find themselves there accidentally, and need to survive and move on. Moreover, its focus on the practicalities of shipwreck survival and inexperience means the boys' adventure story does not voice its anxieties through the maritime supernatural.

The sea was represented as formative, present yet absent, in the middle decades of the nineteenth century. It was no longer written by British sailor-authors and came to represent elements of human psychology. It was of undiminished economic importance, and a site of industrialisation just as much as the land. It might be expected that the socio-economic importance of the sea was reacted to in the same immediate way as the Condition of England novel reacted to social problems resulting from landed industrialisation. The reality is that the sea was marginalised. The literary sea becomes representative of non-maritime issues. Industrial progress meant the sailor had more power over nature through the introduction of steamships, but saw himself gradually replaced by these innovations. However, concerns for the future of seafaring labour did not emerge in maritime fiction until the 1880s, where it is expressed through nostalgia for the age of sail. A detailed study into the origins of this nostalgia has, to my knowledge, not yet been undertaken, but is essential for the understanding of this thesis' subsequent chapters. It is therefore key to consider mid-nineteenth-century developments at sea in more detail.

⁹ Joseph Bristow, *Empire Boys: Adventures in a Man's World* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1991), p. 6.

¹⁰ Patrick Brantlinger, 'Empire and Nationalism' in *The Cambridge Companion to English Literature, 1830–1914* ed. Joanne Shattock (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 251–69; p. 258. See also Kate Flint, 'The Victorian novel and its readers' in *The Cambridge Companion to the Victorian Novel* (2006); Anita Moss, 'Captain Marryat and Sea Adventure' in *Children's Literature Association Quarterly* (1983); Clare Bradford, 'The End of Empire? Colonial and Postcolonial Journeys in Children's Books' in *Children's Literature* (2001).

4.2 The Suez Canal and maritime industrialisation

Philip Steinberg has suggested that the industrial era, which he broadly periodises as 1760 to 1970, ‘took on a spatiality characterized by investment and disinvestment in discrete terrestrial places’ (Steinberg, 112). As a result, the ocean came to be constructed as a place outside of society; no longer a significant space of circulation, it was no longer ‘a space that mattered’ – yet it still provided ‘crucial resources’, especially the resource of connection (Steinberg, 112). Although the ocean, ‘idealized as the anti-thesis of land-space’, was seen as a non-developable space, it was not unimportant, particularly in the romantic imagination (Steinberg, 113–14). However, industrial changes did take place at sea in the mid-nineteenth-century too. Journey times began to shorten through the gradual introduction of steam and intercontinental communication was made easier by successful laying of the first transatlantic telegraph cable in 1858. International telegraph networks soon followed, connecting Europe and the rest of the world in the 1860s and 1870s.¹¹

These networks made communications with the Empire easier and instantaneous, and ‘the administration and economic exploitation of such sprawling domains’ more efficient.¹² Time and space were compressed: mid-nineteenth-century temporal and spatial shifts occurred ‘that so revolutionize the objective qualities of space and time that we are forced to alter, sometimes in quite radical ways, how we represent the world to ourselves’.¹³ The construction of these telegraph networks was partly a maritime enterprise, as miles of telegraph cable were ‘spooled out across the Atlantic seafloor from Isambard Kingdom Brunel’s mighty steamship, the *Great Eastern*’ in 1859 (Tully, 568). Steamships were employed on transatlantic passenger services from the late 1830s and gradually came into regular use. Although they made faraway continents appear within reach, steamships also evoked anxiety because of their strange autonomy that did not require

¹¹ Kate Flint, ‘Transatlantic Currents’, *American Literary History*, 21.2 (2009), 324–34; p. 324.

¹² John Tully, ‘A Victorian Ecological Disaster: Imperialism, the Telegraph, and Gutta-Percha’, *Journal of World History*, 20 (2009), 559–79; p. 560.

¹³ David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), p. 240.

‘participation or guidance of any human being’.¹⁴ This anxiety, experienced by both passengers and sailors, can be identified as one source for late-nineteenth-century nostalgia for the age of sail. The literary meaning of this often-used but little investigated phrase will be discussed in subsequent chapters. Here, I will do some preliminary work on the period it often originates from and on which it generally focuses.

The construction of the Suez Canal between 1859 and 1869 stands out for the purpose of my thesis for two reasons. Opened in November 1869, this 100-mile-long manmade canal allowed a faster voyage from Europe to Asia than via the previous route which took ships around the treacherous Cape of Good Hope, arriving in India from Britain after eight weeks (Kemp, 843). The new route through the Suez Canal, by contrast, cut the journey time in half, not to mention reducing the danger of the voyage by avoiding the Cape.¹⁵ However, the rerouting caused by the newly constructed Canal meant the Flying Dutchman, who, according to legend, haunts the Cape of Good Hope, dropped out of sight. No longer unavoidably confronted with the Cape’s fickle weather, there was also no longer a need for yarns such as that of the Dutchman that attempted to create order in the chaos of Cape storms. If these yarns ceased to circulate around the maritime labour environment, they would also fail to find their way onto the literary market.

This tentative suggestion aside, the construction and opening of the Suez Canal gave way to other developments that influenced global infrastructure and the literary response I record in my thesis, adding to the late-nineteenth-century nostalgia for the age of sail in two ways. The opening of the Canal was partially responsible for the acceleration of the use of steamships, as sailing ships were too bulky and too difficult to navigate through the Canal.¹⁶ Moreover, the British declined to be involved in what was to become a French-Egyptian project. Despite contemporary concerns regarding the potential loss of revenue at the Cape colony, Britain was set to benefit considerably

¹⁴ Isaac Land, *War, Nationalism, and the British Sailor, 1750–1850* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p. 133.

¹⁵ Ailise Bulfin, ‘The Fiction of Gothic Egypt and British Imperial Paranoia: The Curse of the Suez Canal’, *English Literature in Transition, 1880–1920*, 54 (2011), 411–43; p. 413.

¹⁶ Adrian Jarvis, ‘Alfred Holt and the Compound Engine’ in *The Advent of Steam: The Merchant Ship before 1900* eds. Robert Gardiner and Basil Greenhill (London: Conway Maritime Press, 1993), 156–59; p. 158.

from the opening of the Canal as it made voyaging between Britain and the Empire faster and more efficient. Contemporary publications commented on this discrepancy, the changing global infrastructure advancing a change in British self-perception. Post-gap maritime literature and its characteristic nostalgia, while written at a time described as a period ‘when national power and policy, articulate public enthusiasm, and fortunate circumstances combined to reinforce and promote the myths of the sea’, expresses anxiety for the sustainability of these same circumstances.¹⁷

There is a discrepancy between mid-nineteenth-century attitudes towards the construction of the Suez Canal and maritime projects that emerged from the venture, such as increasing manufacturing of steamships, and the late-nineteenth-century nostalgia for this period, by then mythologised in the Victorian collective consciousness as a time when Britannia ruled the waves. Cynthia Behrman lists the elements of the Victorian myth of the sea as follows. The English, by their history and racial inheritance, had the moral right to rule the sea, more than any other seafaring country. As an island, it was geographically and psychologically separate from Europe. The English seaman was the best prototype of the English race. The British Navy was God’s agent on the world’s oceans (Behrman, 2). These ideas shaped the British self-image and became a ‘social truth’ (Behrman, 3). An excellent example (and evidence of the myth’s endurance) can be found in Christopher Keep’s 2002 description of the *Great Eastern*, mentioned above for her role in laying the transatlantic telegraph cable. Keep notes that the *Great Eastern* was enormous; five times larger than other vessels afloat, she was nearly 700 feet long and could carry up to 4000 passengers. She was ‘sold for scrap in 1888, but its sheer scale and size served as a powerful testament to the might of Victorian industrial achievement and of Britain’s continuing domination of the seas’.¹⁸ This description falls in the rhetoric of Behrman’s mythologisation of British

¹⁷ Cynthia Fansler Behrman, *Victorian Myths of the Sea* (Athens, OH: Ohio Union Press, 1977), p. 11. Subsequent references are to this edition and are given in parentheses.

¹⁸ Christopher Keep, ‘Technology and Information: Accelerating Developments’ in *A Companion to the Victorian Novel*, eds. Patrick Brantlinger and William B. Thesing (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2002), 137–54; p. 144.

dominion of the sea; it is equal parts perception and fact.

The construction and use of steamships, an inevitable result of the opening of the Suez Canal, influenced English attitudes to seafaring. As mentioned, sailing ships were found to be too unwieldy to go through the Canal, something already noted as the construction was ongoing in 1863: 'the intricacies of the navigation of the upper part of the Red Sea and the exposed position of the Port Said anchorage would prevent any sailing ship from taking that route to India'.¹⁹ Robert Foulke has pointed out that the 'disappearance of the sailing ship in the late-nineteenth century was neither sudden nor complete'; although the construction of sailing ships suffered a depression after the Canal opened, for bulk trades that needed 'neither great speed or regularity', sailing ships remained in use into the late-1870s and 1880s (Foulke, 'Life', 107). Development was perhaps slow, but steady nevertheless. The opening of the Canal placed sailing ships at several disadvantages compared to steamships, as outlined by maritime historian David MacGregor:

Sailing ships trading to the East were not only at a disadvantage with regard to lower freights but also found that insurance companies were reducing premiums on goods carried by steamers using the Suez Canal. [...] add to this that the steamer could carry teas twice a year, even though she might have to wait much longer to fill up and leave not fully loaded, and it will be seen why no tea clippers were built after 1870 and why they steadily began to look for cargoes elsewhere (MacGregor, 191).

Nostalgia expressed in late-nineteenth-century maritime fiction responds to exactly this steady, irreversible march of progress; it is not, as Andrew Nash has called it a 'lament at the passing of a golden age [...] articulated [...] at the very moment that the displacement was occurring' (Nash, 97). There is no particular moment that can be pinpointed as the origin of nostalgia; it is a reaction to a process of industrialisation that took decades. Nostalgia is necessarily retrospective; changes have to already have occurred before one can long for the situation as it was before the change.

With these changes, the significance of maritime craft diminished and sailors witnessed 'increasing fragmentation, specialization, and de-skilling in the division of labour' (Harvey, 264). The

¹⁹ 'The Suez Canal' in *Saturday Review of Politics, Literature, Science and Art*, 16.405 (1 August 1863), 150–51; p. 151.

use of steam meant British sailors were replaced by Asian seamen willing to work for lower wages.²⁰ Another problem that surfaced through use of steam was loss of experience; experience in sailing ships was no longer highly prized as seafaring was often reduced to shovelling coal. As a result, the maritime labourer, more so than before, becomes 'a more apt representation of the exploited laborer. [...] More so than the sailor, the stoker is a symbol of the working class, like a factory laborer, a slave to the capitalist machine'.²¹ Russell in particular, although he never directly experienced working on steamships, depicts his supernatural seafarers as victims of this new modernity. It can be suggested that it took maritime fiction longer to write the altered sea than it took landed authors to react to industrialisation on land due to maritime changes taking place only gradually, and, importantly, due to the fact these changes took place at sea. Sailor-authors first needed to return to shore before they were to write about their maritime experience.

The discrepancy is found in the late-Victorian myth of English maritime superiority, propagated through celebrations of industrial maritime progress, and the simultaneous nostalgia for the age of sail lamenting the loss of this superiority and of the romance of seafaring on sailing ships. This discrepancy might be explained by considering how the Suez project was perceived and how British sentiments changed over the course of the Canal's construction.

The British government in the late 1850s opposed the Suez Canal project. Aside from reservations about the technical feasibility of the project, a major objection related to Anglo-French power relations in the Mediterranean Sea. In 1857 Prime Minister Lord Palmerston 'declared in the House of Commons that the canal would be profitable to France, but hostile to England's interests. This statement, which created a deep sensation, did more to assist de Lesseps [the French engineer leading the Suez project] in raising capital in his own country than the most

²⁰ Jonathan Hyslop, "'Ghostlike' seafarers and sailing ship nostalgia: the figure of the steamship lascar in the British imagination, c. 1880–1960', *Journal for Maritime Research*, 16 (2014), 212–28, p. 214.

²¹ Anita Duneer, 'Crafting the Sea: Romance and Realism in Jack London's *Martin Eden*', *American Literary Realism*, 47 (2015), 250–71; p. 255.

energetic support of the French Government could have done'.²² The anxiety that the opening of the Canal would be to the detriment of the British was repeated a year later, as

the canal would be a step towards the dismemberment both of the Turkish and British Empires, the arguments by which it was commended to foolish and credulous investors were unsound, if not worse: the railway would always serve British needs more economically than a canal. Never would he be party to such a sacrifice to British interests (Wilson, 21).

The project began, without British involvement, in 1859, financed mostly by France and Egypt.

British commentators shifted their judgment throughout the 1860s, from initial scepticism to expressing regret in the British exclusion from the project when it neared completion in 1869.

These latter sentiments in particular express a continued anxiety at the loss of British agency as global power.

Commercial and political interests were at stake in the construction of the Suez Canal. In November 1869, as the Canal was completed and set to open the same month, Frederick Eaton writes in *Macmillan's Magazine* that '[t]o this accomplishment it must be owned, England has in no way contributed'.²³ One contributor to the *Saturday Review*, in an edition published four days before the opening of the Suez Canal, also notes how England had taken up only a small proportion of shares in the engineering project, and rather spitefully suggests that, after the excitement of the canal's opening has died away, '[t]he local deities, unless they are carefully propitiated, will begin by inviting the River Nile to resume his ancient course [...] and the work of the presumptuous Frenchman will be absorbed into the desert and forgotten'.²⁴ Resenting Britain's non-involvement in the project, this writer suggest that it 'seems to be the proper part of us islanders to build ships to traverse it. The one undertaking will be nearly as honourable, and quite as remunerative, as the other' (*Saturday Review* 28, 636). Confirming Behrman's myth of English maritime superiority, this contributor argues that building steamships, presented here as a British birth-right rather than duty

²² Arnold T. Wilson, *The Suez Canal: Its Past, Present, and Future* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1939), p. 20.

²³ F.A. Eaton, 'The Suez Canal' in *Macmillan's Magazine*, 21.121 (November 1869), 82–95; p. 82.

²⁴ 'The Suez Canal' in *Saturday Review of Politics, Literature, Science and Art*, 28.733 (13 November 1869), 636–37; p. 636.

or privilege, is the way England can take back control over this important waterway – although it hardly appears to be worth the trouble, argues the contributor, as the canal's poorly considered construction was already silting up (*Saturday Review* 28, 636–37).

With the benefit of hindsight, as the Suez Canal became key to sustaining the British Empire, later commentators regretted the non-existent role Britain had played in the realisation of the Canal. The obvious envy of the French turns into anxiety of losing dominance over the canal to the Egyptians and a loss of British agency. In an article published in the *Saturday Review* on 27 November 1869, ten days after the opening of the canal, the anonymous writer sides English interests in the canal with the French, stating that '[t]he concession of entire sovereignty to the Egyptian or Turkish Government would undoubtedly be premature. Englishmen and Frenchmen will not submit to Eastern substitutes for justice'.²⁵ France and British interests are united against a perceived Egyptian threat. Sovereignty over the canal becomes a matter of East versus West and not the subject of contention between France and Britain.

The Canal represented technological achievement for both Egypt *and* the West, but its location in a country viewed as insurmountably unmodern was problematic. Showing the singular mid-Victorian nostalgia for an Egypt that had primarily existed on the pages of *The Thousand and One Nights*, Emily Haddad argues convincingly that this, unlike the landed longing for a rural, anti-urban past, was 'a forthrightly urban nostalgia'.²⁶ At the same time, the periodical writers' 'vision of contemporary Egypt bears few recognizable marks of modernity, leaving Egypt's implied historical trajectory sitting uncomfortably at odds with the master narrative of European progress' (Haddad, 379). Although this would have meant 'the canal's modernity could then have been assumed unproblematically by virtue of its French origin', British periodical writers were hesitant to acknowledge French technological superiority (Haddad, 380). Instead, 'the problem of the canal's modernity [was to] rhetorically [absorb] it into the definitively modern world of British global trade

²⁵ 'The Suez Canal' in *Saturday Review of Politics, Literature, Science and Art*, 28.735 (27 November 1869), 689–90; p. 689.

²⁶ Emily A. Haddad, 'Digging to India: Modernity, Imperialism, and the Suez Canal', *Victorian Studies*, 47 (2005), 363–96; p. 376.

and imperialism' (Haddad, 380).

After the opening of the Suez Canal, which 'simultaneously alter[ed] the geography of the earth and irrevocably [upset] the precarious global balance of power', fiction turned to the Gothic to address anxieties about this change (Bulfin, 411). Bulfin too notes Britain's concern about the canal's potential to 'undermine its global imperial dominance', bringing India closer but simultaneously making the route accessible to rival powers (Bulfin, 411). A 'subgenre of Egyptian-themed gothic fiction began to grow in popularity'; while her main narratives of interest were published in the late-nineteenth century, Bulfin shows that several curse narratives are published from 1869 onwards (Bulfin, 412). In these narratives, cursed Egyptian artefacts are displaced by British protagonists, who are subsequently infected with the curse themselves. The stories clearly warned British readers against getting involved in Egyptian affairs. They are counternarratives of 'reverse-colonialization', 'a paranoid cultural form in which conquered or oppressed colonial subjects return to the West (or to Western officials in the colonies) to wreak terrifying revenge' (Jones, *Horror Stories*, xii).

Valuable distinctions can be made between these curse narratives and the narratives that are the subject of this thesis. There is anxiety about mental and physical pollution brought about by interaction with the Egyptian other. In Flying Dutchman-narratives, however, the curse is not transmissible. The curse is put on the Dutchman as a punishment for him, not to punish others. The Flying Dutchman, who haunts Bulfin's article, particularly in her characterization of 'the vengeful supernatural invader as the embodiment of imperial paranoia', is otherwise unlike her other curse-bearers (Bulfin, 420). Interacting with Egyptian objects or mummies activates the curse and infects Westerners as a punishment. The emphasis on revenge is strong in these narratives and the message, to cease further Western interference in the East, is clear.

Equally important here is Bulfin's research into the number of curse narratives that were published from the opening of the Suez Canal onwards. She establishes that from 1869, surging in the 1880s when Britain occupied Egypt, into the twentieth century, 'perhaps more than a hundred' Egyptian-themed curse narratives were published (Bulfin, 418). Particular attention should be

drawn to her concluding remark on her method: 'Given the correspondence between their dates and significant events in Egypt, it is reasonable to assert that the writers of popular fiction were responding to these events – speculating upon and sensationalising their possible consequences' (Bulfin, 418). The popularity of Egyptian curse narratives on the Victorian literary market might explain the decline in the maritime curse narrative.

The construction of the Suez Canal was one way in which the global infrastructure changed over the course of the nineteenth century. Changing infrastructure drew a certain kind of literary attention away from the Cape of Good Hope onto Egypt; responding to the opening of the Canal, popular authors focused their attention on the potential of a cursed Egyptian past brought to the British mainland. The Canal's opening not only influenced perceptions of time and space, it generated anxiety about Britain's dominance at sea. This is most evident in nostalgic maritime narratives of the later nineteenth century, in which time is no longer linear and complicated temporalities become integral part of the maritime supernatural. Changes to self-perception and self-awareness in relation to the construction of the Suez Canal evidence the mythological nature of British maritime superiority. The initial derision of and later disappointment at this great engineering project suggests an insecurity about the stability of British maritime hegemony.

Emerging from the mid-nineteenth-century gap are maritime narratives that are not *just* metaphorical, as has been claimed, but also those that retain seafaring as a decisive component of the narrative logic. Maritime supernatural narratives post-gap are no longer about a single legend; whereas before the 1850s the subgenre consisted of mostly novelised Dutchman yarns, after 1870 the routinization of the sea gave way to much wider interpretations of the maritime supernatural, within similar parameters as before. This will be further discussed in the following chapters. The Suez Canal-gap brought the sea into a new kind of consciousness as site of British maritime power and prowess as well as evoke the potential of the disintegration of the same power.

The tone of this chapter has been intentionally suggestive, as it is impossible to pinpoint one single event as the reason for the mid-nineteenth-century gap in maritime hauntings and curse narratives. The building of the Suez Canal did alter maritime fiction, and it is more than merely a

symbol of the industrial momentum and changes in global connections later reflected in fiction. As will be discussed in subsequent chapters, the language and focus of Russell and Hodgson is very different from Marryat: the ship itself becomes a site of anxiety rather than a site that facilitates anxiety about landed things. Changing infrastructure changes the maritime imagination. At this time of apparent economic stability and simultaneous enormous social change, the Dutchman is temporarily out of sight and mind of British sailor-authors. The Suez Canal, in its brand-new, manmade glory, does not (yet) hold any ghosts. Bulfin's curse narratives evidence the ghosts were already in Egypt. They did not follow the British ships but were disturbed by their passengers (not sailors – there is no mention of seafaring labour; instead, the gentleman-amateur-archaeologist takes the stage), returning with them to England. Ghosts were not in the machines of modernity but in the artefacts of antiquity.

Chapter 5: William Clark Russell: nostalgia and the future of shipboard labour.

A well-known author in his own time, William Clark Russell mainly wrote maritime adventure fiction but ventured into the maritime supernatural twice.¹ I will discuss how the parameters of Russell's maritime adventure fiction are distorted by the supernatural, which allows for an expression of anxiety in ways that adventure fiction does not. Whereas his adventure novels are nostalgic for sailing, the nostalgia is found in his lengthy descriptions of the sailing ships and the sailing of ships. In his maritime supernatural fiction, there is a similar longing for sailing ships, but this longing for the past mixed with anxiety for the future of seafaring. In his 1887 two-part novel *The Frozen Pirate* the supernatural approaches the realm of science fiction as one of the first literary instances of cryonics. *The Death Ship*, published in three parts in 1888, is a more traditional maritime supernatural narrative based on the Flying Dutchman legend. The supernatural atmosphere is central to *The Frozen Pirate*, more than its dubious moral message. In *The Death Ship* it is developed as narrative structure which determines the direction of the novel's plot. This predetermined maritime supernatural allows for an exploration of other anxieties, of the future of seafaring labour and national identity.

I would like to distinguish between Russell's two novels by considering the different functions of the maritime supernatural. Both the maritime supernatural as narrative element and as narrative structure are expressions of the spectral at sea. The effect of either expression is different, however; whereas the maritime supernatural as element allows Russell more flexibility in the interpretation of the supernatural itself, the preset conditions of the maritime supernatural as hegemonic to the narrative structure imposes restrictions on the interpretation of certain

¹ See Andrew Nash's exhaustive Russell bibliography in his in-depth study of the author's work *William Clark Russell and the Victorian Nautical Novel* (2014), pp. 183–88.

supernatural events but simultaneously allows for a reflection on socio-political issues.

The Frozen Pirate was generally well-received upon its 1887 serial publication, with one reviewer judging it ‘well written, boldly descriptive, and interesting throughout [...]. The number is quite up to the average of this magazine, which is a sufficient warranty of its excellence’.² It was Russell’s ‘most substantial contribution to the romance revival’ of the 1880s (Nash, 91). Russell, it was noted in a review in the *Graphic*,

has in some extent made a departure from his ordinary methods; and has, in doing so, thrown overboard (the term is specially appropriate) his few characteristic weaknesses. He has very wisely ignored the convention – for it is nothing else – that what is called “feminine interest” is essential to a romance, and has not introduced so much as one female character’.³

His engagement with maritime supernatural themes, on the other hand, received a mixed response. The *Graphic* review judges that ‘[i]t is all very interesting, especially the fate of the revived pirate; and all is told in a plain, seamanlike manner, very much more effective and realistic than the pseudo-science with which M. Jules Verne would have dressed up such a tale’ (*Graphic* 948). A review in the *Dublin Review*, on the other hand, deems ‘some of the incidents of this narrative [as] too extravagant to be clothed with vraisemblance, even by [Russell’s] vivid realism’.⁴ The reviewer accepts the descriptions of the ice island, the edibility of the frozen food ‘may be accepted under protest, but the resuscitation of a pirate unintentionally thawed after a like period of congelation, transcends the faith of the most devoutly credulous of the reading public’ (*Dublin Review*, 432). *The Dublin Review*’s Catholic orientation might account for its distaste of the frozen pirate returned to life. The realism of the supernatural novel seems contradictory, but resonated with Russell’s reading public, making the sublime horror of the story an interesting experience. The reviews moreover note the narrative’s supernatural elements as something they have not come across before; although the maritime supernatural is evidently not a new genre, Russell’s

² ‘REVIEWS’ in *Bury and Norwich Post* (20 Sept. 1887), p. 8.

³ ‘New Novels’ in *Graphic*, 948 (28 Jan. 1888), n/p.

⁴ ‘The frozen pirate’ in *Dublin Review*, 19.2 (1888), p. 432.

innovative writing is still unprecedented.

The Death Ship was also received positively by most contemporary reviewers, although several could not help but compare and contrast Russell's three-part novel with Frederick Marryat's *The Phantom Ship*. One review in the *Academy* notes that *The Death Ship* is 'wholly unlike' *The Phantom Ship*, and that Russell has 'broken new ground to some extent' with this new interpretation of the legend.⁵ Russell 'made the crew much more human and natural than they are commonly represented' (*Academy*, 220). Similar observations are made elsewhere; in the *Graphic*, the reviewer notes how Vanderdecken, 'for the first time, is rendered in human colours'.⁶ The *Dublin Review* notes how the cursed men are 'made more vital [...] than they ever were before'.⁷ Comparisons with his predecessors usually favour Russell's interpretation of the legend, but it also implies the Dutchman legend was not an original subject – very differently from *The Frozen Pirate*. The Dutchman legend was comfortably familiar; the reviewer in *Graphic* notes how the author 'has succeeded in putting fresh power and pathos into that wild and terrible old story' (*Graphic* 989). The *Dublin Review* lauds Russell's reinterpretation of the Dutchman legend, noting how he 'has chosen for his latest task the difficult one of revivifying, in the form of a novel, that most fascinating of all nautical legends, "The Flying Dutchman."' (*Dublin Review*, 173).

These reviews' emphasis on the legend's resurfacing and the impossibility of not comparing and contrasting *The Death Ship* with Russell's literary predecessors imply a sense that the author continued, by then, tired themes. This sentiment is voiced unequivocally in a review in the *Athenaeum*, which comments that Russell 'must have been hard pressed [for original ideas] when he adopted so preposterous an idea for the foundation of a yarn in three volumes. It is impossible for the reader to cheat himself into any real interest in such a tale'.⁸ Russell's new interpretation of the Dutchman legend could not be separated from versions that had come before it. His interpretation of the maritime supernatural was seen as an interesting continuation on the theme

⁵ 'New Novels' in *Academy*, 857 (6 October 1888), 219–20; p. 220.

⁶ 'New Novels' in *Graphic*, 989 (10 November 1888), n/p.

⁷ 'The death ship' in *Dublin Review*, 21.1 (1889), 173–74; p. 173.

⁸ 'Novels of the Week' in *Athenaeum*, 3185 (10 November 1888), 623–24; p. 623.

of the supernatural at sea, but they overlook the novel's expression of socio-economic concerns and anxieties around national identity.

5.1 *The Frozen Pirate* (1887)

The Frozen Pirate (1887) is a curious mix of Victorian romance and maritime supernatural tale, combining elements of Spiritualism and science fiction. The narrative relates the story of Paul Rodney, the only survivor of a shipwreck which leaves him on a small boat in the Antarctic Ocean, where he comes upon a frozen island where he finds an entire ship encased in the ice. In the ship, he finds the stores intact and discovers a few frozen bodies, one of which he accidentally allows to thaw and finds is still viable. Rodney and the frozen pirate, Jules Tassard, attempt to blast the ice away from the ship but Tassard dies just before they succeed. Rodney manages to free the ship alone and sails it to England with the help of a passing American whaler.

This section considers Russell's use of elements of the maritime supernatural in this novel. His descriptions of the sublime Antarctic landscape set up a supernatural narrative stretching into timelessness, and compressing time at other points. It is not a well-known text, and academics have been conservative in their responses. Andrew Nash discusses Russell's skilled depictions of the sublime Antarctic landscape and its supernatural potential, noting how ultimately the narrative is really an adventure romance. Nash's analysis is insightful, but ultimately focused on tracing the novel's potential sources and success in the Victorian literary market. It is therefore not terribly detailed, and a closer reading of *The Frozen Pirate* reveals a more complicated engagement with temporality and the Antarctic setting than Nash suggests.

Elizabeth Leane, in her 2009 'The Land that Time Forgot: Fictions in Antarctic Temporality', suggests *The Frozen Pirate* is possibly the 'earliest example of cryonics in fiction'.⁹ Her study, which

⁹ Elizabeth Leane, 'The Land that Time Forgot: Fictions of Antarctic Temporality' in *Futurescapes in Utopian and Science Fiction Discourses* ed. Ralph Pordzik (New York and Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2009), 199–223; p. 213.

is really about Antarctica's strange timelessness and its role in fiction, argues that Antarctica is 'a place with its own distinct temporality', which in fiction involves elements of the supernatural (Leane, 200). Time stretches and narrows because of both the impossibility and vital necessity of accurate timekeeping in this place that has no time zone of itself – vital, because 'the proximity of the Magnetic Pole makes compasses unreliable' (Leane, 202).

The strange temporality of the narrative of *The Frozen Pirate* is frightening, a sensibility further evoked through the descriptions of the Antarctic setting as horrifyingly featureless and awe-inspiring. The discovery of a frozen ship with her cryonically preserved occupants, and the uncertainty about their ontological status, is not only an expression of the warping temporality of the Antarctic, but also introduces a scientific element to the supernatural in the resuscitation of one frozen pirate. Finally, as the maritime supernatural elements disappear with Tassard's death, *The Frozen Pirate* becomes a maritime adventure narrative. In this story, Russell's use of maritime supernatural elements determine the atmosphere while retaining the emphasis on the nature of seafaring. The following reading draws out the implications of this balance between supernatural and adventure narrative.

Russell's unconventional engagement with the maritime supernatural in this narrative, unmoored from traditional maritime lore, seems to rely on an uncanniness that pervades seafaring, the sense of being not-quite familiar with the environment. The naturally spectral Antarctic landscape creates an uncanny atmosphere in which the supernatural is expected to occur. Nash suggests that 'Rodney's descriptions of the blurred land and seascapes establish a mood that portends the supernatural events that follow. His narrative is charged with references to superstition and the supernatural. He sees heads and bodies of monsters and giants in the cliff's face and imagines "the souls of seamen drowned in these seas" flocking to the ice and haunting it' (Nash, 95).¹⁰ The maritime space around the Antarctic, remarkably bleak and featureless apart from floating icebergs, is separate and isolated.

¹⁰ William Clark Russell, *The Frozen Pirate* (Toronto: William Bryce, 1887), p. 53.

The Antarctic is also a place ‘that appears to offer direct access to the past, its ice acting as a kind of archive of previous ages’ (Leane, 201). In *The Frozen Pirate* the landscape literally contains the past. The ice island, floating a few hundred miles off the Antarctic coast, has perfectly preserved an entire mid-eighteenth-century ship, her stores, treasures and occupants, creating a time capsule which enables Rodney to temporarily travel back in time. The frequent references to timekeeping contrast starkly with the apparent unchanging nature of the desolate frozen island – yet the awareness that the island, which is slowly moving northwards, will melt, creates urgency in Rodney’s attempts to clear the frozen vessel from the icy mass to regain mastery of the ship’s course. Time simultaneously stretches indefinitely but is also running out. More importantly, perhaps, this race against time, and race to find time, reflects the eponymous frozen pirate’s fate, whose suspended animation supernaturally lengthens his life, only for him to age quickly.

The Frozen Pirate nonetheless has literary predecessors, although it is not based on an existing maritime legend. Nash names *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* as an evident source; ‘the Antarctic setting; the field of ice; the life-in-death forms of the frozen sailors, one of whom rises to help Rodney escape his fate; there is [...] even an albatross which, early in the story, portentously circles Rodney’s wreck, seemingly beckoned by “the upraised arms” of one of his fallen fellow sailors’ (Nash, 93; Russell, *Pirate*, 33). In both *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* and *The Frozen Pirate*, the emphasis on the physical landscape connects the maritime supernatural with the sublime. ‘*The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*’, says Tim Fulford, encompasses ‘a sea voyage into unknown areas [which] forms an outward dramatization of the inward conditions that, in Coleridge’s diagnosis, produced superstition. The mariner journeys beyond the limits of geographic knowledge, where he finds himself helpless before powers and events over which he has no control’.¹¹ Rodney, unlike the Mariner, journeys from powerlessness to agency; the tones and structures of the realist novel ensures he is provided for and preoccupied with survival. The supernatural and sublime never overcome him.

¹¹ Tim Fulford, ‘Slavery and superstition in the supernatural poems’ in *The Cambridge Companion to Coleridge*, ed. Lucy Newlyn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 45–58; p. 49.

Once Rodney's own ship, the *Laughing Mary*, has sunk and he is the sole survivor, he loses track of time, only registering the number of days he drifts around on his small boat. Rodney's first reaction to seeing the island of ice is one of disbelief: 'It cannot be ice! 'tis too mighty a barrier. Surely no single iceberg ever reached to the prodigious proportions of that coast. And it cannot be an assemblage of bergs, for there is no break – it is leagues of solid conformation' (Russell, *Pirate*, 42). Rodney's sailing experience initially prevents him from grasping the immensity of the frozen island, and simultaneously suggests that the island's size is otherworldly and unnatural. As he comes closer to the island, Rodney only confirms the reality of what he sees, and comments on 'how shocking to me was the appearance of that great gleaming length of white desolation' (Russell, *Pirate*, 45). Though the icy mass 'would have offered a noble and magnificent spectacle to a mind at ease', to Rodney,

its enchantments were killed by the horror that I felt. It was a lonely, hideous waste, rendered the more shocking by the consideration that the whole vast range was formed of blocks of frozen water which warmth would dissolve; that it was a country as solid as rock and as unsubstantial as a cloud, to be shunned by the mariner as though it was Death's own pavilion, the estate and mansion of the grisly spectre, and creating round about it as supreme a desolation and loneliness of ocean as that which reigned in its own white stillness (Russell, *Pirate*, 45–46).

Rodney experiences a sublime sense of horror at the uncanny whiteness of the island, with its potential to contain familiar landscapes and yet display nothing, like a blank canvas. Like *Moby-Dick's* Ishmael, who is similarly horrified by whiteness and feels a 'rather vague, nameless horror' concerning the white whale, Rodney faces the desolate icy nothingness with horror (Melville, 189). The whiteness of the Antarctic landscape is visceral and immediate, unlike the whiteness of the whale, which is on the verge of being metaphorised and abstracted.¹²

Rodney's failure to grasp the truth of what he is seeing suggests Rodney experiences the

¹² Several interpretations of what whiteness meant to Melville have been suggested, including the emptiness of nature and the mystery of being; e.g. see Harry Tucker Jr., 'A Glance at "Whiteness" in Melville and Camus' in *PMLA* (1965); G. Thomas Tanselle, 'A Further Note on "Whiteness" in Melville and Others' in *PMLA* (1966); William V. Spanos, 'The "Nameless Horror": The Errant Art of Herman Melville and Charles Hewitt' in *boundary 2* (1980).

sublime, in the Burkean sense of being literally and figuratively 'beyond our sight'.¹³ The sublime, the invocation of pleasurable terror at the sight of overwhelming nature, pervades Russell's fiction, notes Nash, who argues that the author moves the sublime onto the ship for a first-hand experience of the beauty and terror of the ocean: 'his elaborate evocation of the colours and movements of ocean panorama (which were often likened to [J.M.W.] Turner's paintings) were conducted from on board ship' (Nash, 8). In *The Frozen Pirate*, Russell moves the experience of the sublime from the ship to the icy landscape of Antarctica.

Though he recognises the natural beauty of the ice island, the potential changeability of the ice fills Rodney with sublime horror. The Antarctic environment is unfamiliar and yet uncannily reminiscent of landed mountains and peaks: 'This setting allows for the willing suspension of disbelief necessary for the supernatural events to be taken on board. The Atlantic Circle is presented as a world on the edge of dissolution' (Nash, 94). There is an implied supernaturalness in the uncertain nature of the ice, which appears simultaneously in all three states of water, ice and vapour. The sense of horror always retains a focus on the physical nature of the supernatural phenomena; the physicality of the frozen island is horrifying, but the undoubted reality of the frozen pirates equally fills Rodney with terror. It is not the imagination that is frightening, but the potential contained within the reality of the ice. The sublime sense of awe and fear remains as Rodney explores the island but the object of his sublime gaze quickly moves from the ice island to the frozen pirate himself.

Rodney's discovery of four frozen bodies – one sitting under a rock, another on the deck of the frozen ship and two in the cabin – shifts the focus from sublime, terrifying nature to uncanny uncertainty of life or death. The frozen bodies, like the ice island, hover between states, completely frozen although apparently alive. Upon his discovery of the first pirate, Rodney notes how '[i]t never entered into my head to doubt that he was alive, so natural was his attitude, as of one lost in a mood of tender melancholy' (Russell, *Pirate*, 60). Another is described as being

¹³ Barbara Glenn, 'Melville and the Sublime in *Moby-Dick*', *American Literature*, 48 (1976), 165–82; p. 166.

so lifelike, there was so wild and fierce an earnestness in the expression of his face, so inimitable a picture of horror in his starting posture, that my hands fell to my side and I could not lay hold of him. I will not stop to analyse my fear or ask why, since I knew that this man was dead, he should have terrified me as surely no living man could (Russell, *Pirate*, 136).

Rodney quickly determines the age of the frozen ship (and, by extension, of her still-hidden occupants), not only from the snow piled on top of her but, using his experience as a sailor, moreover ‘found her age in the structure of her bows, the headboards of which curved very low round to the top of the stem [...] after the fashion of shipbuilding in vogue in the reign of Anne and the first two Georges’ (Russell, *Pirate*, 71). The ship, preserved in the ice like a time capsule, has remained the same from the day her occupants froze into stillness. It is notable that Rodney relies on his seafaring experience to determine the vessel’s age. Although he finds one of the frozen bodies before noticing the ship, he notes that ‘[t]here was nothing to tell me who he was nor how long he had been on the island’ (Russell, *Pirate*, 64). Rodney, as sailor, cannot necessarily recognise old-fashioned clothes, but can identify outdated shipbuilding practices.

One of the first items Rodney takes from one of the frozen bodies is a watch, initially as a potential trade item in case he is rescued from the island. The mechanism still works after forty-eight years on the frozen island, but Rodney needs to guess the time when he first sets it. The uncertainty of the time it indicates is threaded through the narrative, checking it regularly and regulating his daily routine based on the time it displays. Rodney is always conscious of the fact that he guessed the time when he first set it, often referring to the time as eight or nine o’clock ‘by the watch I was wearing’ or ‘by the watch in my pocket’ (Russell, *Pirate*, 117; 134). The realistic obsession with actual time-keeping sets up the supernatural abilities of time. It is moreover uncannily mirrored by the cryonically frozen pirate’s unnatural longevity and disbelief in the length of his cryonic sleep.

Rodney accidentally discovers one of the frozen bodies is viable, and attempts to restore it from its suspended animation. It never becomes clear whether the other frozen pirates are also viable, as Tassard refuses to attempt to revive them, suggesting his old companions ‘would reward

your kindness with the poniard that you might not tell tales against them or claim a share of the treasure in the vessel?' (Russell, *Pirate*, 175). He disposes of them before Rodney can interfere, but not before he removes all valuables from their pockets. Tassard reinforces the 'Antarctic temporal strangeness' by asserting he has been asleep for three days, or at most four months, not forty-eight years (Leane, 202). Rodney cannot convince Tassard of the truth, who remains adamant the year is 1753 and not 1801 (Russell, *Pirate*, 155). With Tassard's awakening, the threat of the supernatural is removed; while Rodney was initially afraid of the frozen bodies, their uncanny presence weighing heavily on his mind, upon realising the Frenchman might come back to life, 'the notion of that man having lain torpid for half a century held me under a perpetual spell of astonishment; but there was no more horror in me nor fright' (Russell, *Pirate*, 146).

The figure of the cryonically frozen pirate Tassard suggests an engagement with Spiritualist notions which 'sought to make the spiritual world visible, scientifically proven and technologically advanced'.¹⁴ Through séances, spiritualists attempted to prove the possibility of communication with the dead, and the protagonists of both Russell's maritime supernatural narratives attempt to communicate with those who are supposed to be dead according to the laws of nature. In *The Frozen Pirate*, the supernatural and the scientific meet in cryonics, and Russell seems particularly to mediate the Spiritualist claim of 'the survival and immortality of the spirit following bodily death'.¹⁵ Tassard's lingering spirit ensures his emergence from suspended animation. Although he is technically supposed to be dead, the spirit of the frozen pirate remains intact and, importantly, unchanged.

The cryonically preserved pirate retains the same characteristics he possessed before being frozen: 'He had been as good as dead for nearly fifty years, yet he brought with him into life exactly the same qualities he had carried with him in his exit' (Russell, *Pirate*, 168). Tassard proves to be a

¹⁴ Tatiana Kontou and Sarah Willburn, 'Introduction' to *The Ashgate Research Companion to Nineteenth-Century Spiritualism and the Occult* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2012), 1–16; p. 2.

¹⁵ Richard Noakes, 'Spiritualism, science and the supernatural in mid-Victorian Britain' in *The Victorian Supernatural* eds. Nicola Brown, Carolyn Burdett, Pamela Thurschwell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 23–43; p. 27.

disagreeable, hostile and violent man, and Rodney feels unsafe in his presence, noting how he is 'after eight-and-forty years of insensibility as real a pirate at heart as ever he had been' (Russell, *Pirate*, 181). Tassard is literally and figuratively on the edge of humanity; a pirate who is *hostis humanis generi*, the enemy of all mankind. Acts of piracy take place outside the jurisdiction of any country, placing pirates outside landed laws.¹⁶ They exist 'beyond the natural scope of society'.¹⁷ Tassard, more unnatural than normal pirates, embodies the otherness resulting from this separation between pirates and other seafaring men. Although he is not cursed in the way the Flying Dutchman is, Tassard still gives him the identity of the cursed figure. The term pirate stands in for accursed figure; identifying him as pirate others Tassard and places him in exile.

Tassard soon begins to age rapidly, and his mental and physical capacities are quickly reduced to nothing. Rodney, preoccupied with his attempts to free the ship from the ice than with his companion's suddenly changing appearance, explains the sudden deterioration by calling on the authority of landed scientists. He notes

It has puzzled every member of the faculty that I have mentioned it to, the supposition being that, given the case of suspended animation, there is no waste, and the person would quit his stupor with the same powers and aspect as he possessed when he entered it, though it lasted a thousand years. But granting there is no waste, Time is always present waiting to settle accounts when the sleeper lifts his head. There may be an artificial interval, during which the victim might show as my pirate did, but the poised load of years is severed on a sudden by the scythe and becomes superincumbent, and with the weight comes the transformation; and this theory, as the only eye-witness of the marvellous thing, I will hold and maintain whilst I have breath in my body to support it (Russell, *Pirate*, 282).

There is no waste – time again moves in unaccountable ways and quickly consumes Tassard.

Rodney describes discussing the matter with members of an unnamed faculty or society specialising in matters of suspended animation, again relating the supernatural events to scientific investigation. After an evening contemplating how he will get his treasure to land without

¹⁶ Phillip A. Buhler, 'New Struggle with an Old Menace: Towards a Revised Definition of Maritime Piracy', *International Trade Law Journal*, 8 (1999), 61–71; p. 65.

¹⁷ Douglas R. Burgess Jr., 'Hostis Humani Generi: Pirates, Terrorism and a New International Law', *University of Miami International and Comparative Law Review*, 13 (2005), 293–343; p. 301.

interference of customs officers on the Thames, Rodney awakes to find Tassard once again frozen, exhibiting no signs of life. The real world briefly intrudes on the Antarctic setting through Rodney's contemplations, which seems to solidify his decision not to resuscitate Tassard. Rodney admits that 'though it occurred to me to test if life was out of him by bringing him close to the fire and chafing him and giving him brandy, I would not stir. No, I would not have moved a finger to recover him, even though I should have been able to do so by merely putting him to the furnace. He was dead, and there was an end' (Russell, *Pirate*, 293–94). Without Tassard, Rodney can keep the piratical treasure for himself. He resembles the now-dead French pirate, who similarly could have checked whether his crewmates were still alive but does not out of greed.

With Tassard's demise, the supernatural slowly disappears from the narrative. In the remaining chapters of *The Frozen Pirate*, Rodney concerns himself with freeing the frozen ship from the ice and securing the piratical treasure. He mans the ship by himself, and is relieved to encounter an American whale ship. Displaced in time, Rodney's ancient ship appears spectral to the American whalers: 'superstition lay strong upon their imagination' and they are reluctant to go on board (Russell, *Pirate*, 331). In the cabin, the delegation of American whalers makes the frozen ship appear to be haunted, their presence 'rendered the vessel a vast deal more ghostly than ever she could have shown when sailing along with me alone on board' (Russell, *Pirate*, 333). Eventually, the supernatural effect of the temporally displaced ship wears off, and Rodney manages to secure a few men to sail the ship to London. Rodney can keep the pirate treasure, argues Andrew Nash, because '[i]n the amoral world of adventure, heroic triumph against the elements brings its rightful reward' (Nash, 97). The morality of the novel's end is more ambiguous than Nash suggests. Arranging for the piratical treasure to be smuggled onto land, Rodney ventures into illegal practices himself, once again resembling the now-dead frozen pirate.

The supernatural in *The Frozen Pirate* is focused on narrative elements rather than narrative structure. The novel is ultimately an adventure story, albeit with supernatural elements, and its engagement with the sublime moves the gaze from the ship to Antarctic ice that uncannily preserves the past. Russell's descriptive powers of maritime life contribute strongly to the

supernatural effects. The maritime supernatural elements in *The Frozen Pirate* are entertaining, and the supernatural does not disturb in the critical ways I have been tracking in this thesis; there is no community to be disturbed, and while anxieties surface through the presence of the 'ghost' ship, they are quickly quashed. Published a year after *The Frozen Pirate*, *The Death Ship* expands the maritime supernatural themes into narrative structure. Based on an existing maritime legend, *The Death Ship* questions the suspended animation of sailors cursed to perform seafaring labour for eternity, and sustains a sense of anxiety about the experience of being haunted at sea.

5.2 *The Death Ship* (1888)

Unlike *The Frozen Pirate*, with its ambiguous morality, *The Death Ship* was written with a clear message in mind. Like *The Frozen Pirate*, *The Death Ship* has conflicting temporalities: the cursed men are presented as savage creatures of the seventeenth-century past, but also represent a nineteenth-century anxiety for the future of seafaring labour. Russell read in the legend of the Flying Dutchman the desperation of the cursed sailors, and emphasises their miserable fate of eternal labour. This emerges from several of Russell's writings before and after the publication of *The Death Ship*. A first version of the narrative, a short story named 'An encounter with a ghost', was published in his 1882 short story collection *My Watch Below; Or, Yarns Spun when Off Duty*. It relates the sighting of the Dutchman's ship '1500 miles to the east'ards of Montauk Point' in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean.¹⁸ A cursed Dutch sailor 'spoke to 'em for ten minutes, never stoppin', goin' along slow and regular, without e'er a movement in his face, and his arms hanging up and down alongside of him without a stir' (Russell, 'Encounter'). The living board the spectral ship, as in *The Death Ship*, and the cursed crew look ageless, speak mechanically and 'never moved; there they stood sunning themselves, and the dim old cove as steered looked at nothin' but the leech o'

¹⁸ William Clark Russell, 'An encounter with a ghost' 1882 in *Cursed Forever to Sail the Seas – The Tales of the Flying Dutchman* (Alchester: Read Books, 2011). The version in this collection has no page numbers.

the topgallant sail, though the wessel was hove-to, mind' (Russell, 'Encounter').

The 'dim old cove' referred to here is the steersman, and his actions are strange; although the vessel is hove-to and the steersman is able to leave the wheel, he remains in position. The living sailors leave the ship as it seems nothing can be done for the strange sailors who cannot make themselves understood in a language familiar to any of the multicultural living crew, who ultimately leave the ship as she was, unable to understand the needs of the cursed crew. After returning to the ship, the cook tells the unnamed protagonist it was the Flying Dutchman's cursed ship they encountered, and that a storm will soon follow. The narrative ends with the discovery they have been blown off-course by 100 miles, and that a hurricane is approaching, implying the ship will soon meet with disaster.

The boarding of the spectral ship by the living, the interaction with her unmoving crew and an emphasis on the multicultural nature of seafaring are Russell's additions or emphases to the Dutchman legend, and this resurfaces in *The Death Ship*. In his contribution to Jerome K. Jerome's *My First Book* Russell emphasises maritime fiction's ability to convey truthfully 'the inner life of the fore-castle and the cabin' (Russell, 'Wreck', 33). This interest in the socio-economic aspects of seafaring extended to the maritime supernatural in the Dutchman legend. For Russell, it conveyed the horror implicit in the useless labour of the cursed sailors. In his introduction to Marryat's *The Phantom Ship* he expresses this sentiment clearly: 'every sailor who is acquainted with tacks and sheets, grieves to think of the endless labour to which the phantom crew are dedicated by the curse of what is known as "'bouting ship.'" (Russell, 'Introduction', v).¹⁹ Abouting or tacking is a difficult and dangerous operation, and Russell is clearly sympathetic to the cursed men who are forced to perform this task for eternity. Russell's sympathy with the perpetual labour of the cursed sailors develops into an expression of anxiety for the dispensability of seafaring labour in *The Death*

¹⁹ 'ABOUT, a term used in sailing, meaning across the wind in relation to the bow of a sailing vessel. Thus, when a ship tacks across the wind to bring it from one side of the ship to the other, she is said to go about.' (Kemp, 3).

Also: 'TACK, to, the operation of bringing a sailing vessel head to wind and across it so as to bring the wind on the opposite side of the vessel. During this manoeuvre the vessel is said to be in stays, or staying, or coming about' (Kemp, 853).

Ship.

This section will first consider the anxieties around national identity and the future of labour in *The Death Ship*. Cynthia Behrman, in her study of Victorian mythologisation of the sea, states that the nineteenth-century sailor was seen as a kind of ideal Englishman, 'a kind of national distillation' (Behrman, 58). Yet, at the same time, the sailor was simultaneously seen as dangerous and generally unwholesome.²⁰ *The Death Ship* voices concerns about the sustainability of this image. Russell forces his English protagonist Geoffrey in the role of passive spectator observing the supernatural events on board the spectral ship. Forced to dress in foreign clothes, he loses an intrinsic sense of Englishness, a sense that is not as strong as it appears from the outside. Although the British maritime superiority is often threatened in Russell's narratives, these crises usually arise from mismanagement of his fictional ships and 'weakness of character among captains and seamen' (Nash, 30). In *The Death Ship*, the crisis, nostalgia for the age of sail, is linked with anxiety for lost agency. Russell's attempt to reassert and reinforce security and confidence in English sailing ability is disrupted by the supernatural, and the anxiety fails to be completely resolved.

Second, this section will focus on Russell's concerns for the dispensability of seafaring labour. The element that stands out most for Russell is the cursed sailors' plight to labour forever. In *The Death Ship* the characterisation of the cursed sailors as automatons and the futile hopelessness of their situation embodies a fear of the future. *The Death Ship*, unlike some of Russell's other novels, is not a manifesto for the rights of English sailors. Russell's most popular novel, *The Wreck of the 'Grosvenor'* (1877), involves 'mutiny arising from mistreatment of the crew by the captain', a theme that would resurface in *The Little Loo* a year later (Nash, 85). The morality of these novels is ambiguous, says Nash, as Russell sympathises with the mutineers' reasons to mutiny but ultimately, they are also punished. *The Death Ship* wraps its message in the maritime supernatural themes instead. This allows for a detailed consideration of Russell's nostalgia for the age of sail.

²⁰ See Lesley A. Hall, 'What shall we do with the poxy sailor?' in *Journal for Maritime Research* (2004); Jason Berger, 'Antebellum Fantasies of the Common Sailor; or, Enjoying the Knowing Jack Tar' in *Criticism* (2009); Markus Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea* (1987); Isaac Land, *War, Nationalism, and the British Sailor* (2009).

Nash outlines how Russell explicitly supported better working conditions in the British mercantile service and how, having worked in the service himself, he sympathised with working sailors' harsh existence on board ships. Simultaneously lamenting the loss of sail ships and expressing concerns for the future state of seafaring, *The Death Ship's* maritime supernatural narrative structure reveals an unexpected engagement with sailors' socio-economic futures.

Behrman's consideration of the myth of the English seaman confirms that the idea of the superior English sailor was widespread in the nineteenth century. According to Behrman, '[t]he myth extolled courage, daring, enterprise, and character' (Behrman, 68). Sailing ability only came into play when the English sailor was compared to a foreign seaman, in which case 'frequently, [the English'] superiority as sailors was attributed not to exact training but to their inborn virtues of human beings' (Behrman, 68). The Englishman is a born sailor; the capacity of mastering the waves is in their blood. The 'widespread, uncritical racism that infects much of his work' shows that Russell generally helped perpetuate this myth, and places his work comfortably in an existing discourse on English superiority at sea (Nash, 101). In *The Death Ship*, the idea of the superior English sailor is complicated. Agency is taken from its English protagonist Geoffrey as soon as he boards the spectral ship, where he is forced to nearly assimilate with the cursed Dutch crew. This section will consider how the myth of the superior English seafarer is disturbed by the supernatural.

Whether or not the British really had superior sailing abilities is irrelevant: 'Not factual but sentient history, not what is, but what is felt to be [...] is the crucial dimension of ethnic and national identity'.²¹ Similarly, Behrman points out that 'it scarcely matters what "actually happened" in the past; what people think happened is what their actions are based upon' (Behrman, 24). The British generally *felt* their nation was superior at sea. These subjective interpretations of history are reminiscent of nostalgia, but more so of the rather obscure historical

²¹ Anthony Smith, "'Set in the Silver Sea': English National Identity and European Integration'. Part of the workshop *National Identity and Euroscepticism* on 13 May 2005 (University of Oxford; Department of Politics and International Relations; Centre for the Study of Democratic Government), 1–14; p. 4.

concept of mnemohistory. Agnes Andeweg introduces this form of historical interpretation to Flying Dutchman lore in her 2015 article on cultural manifestations of the legend. Mnemohistory ‘is more interested in the actual relevance of the past than in the past for its own sake’ (Andeweg, ‘Manifestations’, 189). It is ‘concerned not with the past as such but only with the past as it is remembered’.²² Like nostalgia, it allows certain aspects of the past to represent the whole. The mnemohistorical past ‘is not simply “received” by the present. The present is “haunted” by the past and the past is modelled, invented, reinvented and reconstructed by the present’ (Assman, 9). Mnemohistory shows the same events are remembered as good *or* bad, depending on cultural perspective – on who does the remembering. This is why it works for Andeweg’s thesis; she aims to explain why in current Dutch culture, the Flying Dutchman epithet is used in a positive sense whereas the original English narratives that employ the legend perceive “Dutchness” as decidedly negative.

For my thesis, the concept of nostalgia is more relevant than mnemohistory. In maritime fiction and maritime history studies, nostalgia is the more commonly employed concept used to consider the emotions related to the seafaring past. The phrase “nostalgia for the age of sail” is ubiquitously used. Nostalgia’s emphasis on emotions makes it more appropriate to use in literary study than the purely historical theoretical model of mnemohistory. The novel’s anxiety towards the obscurity of markers of national identity suggests Behrman’s myth of the superior English sailor is challenged through the confusing mix of physiognomic characteristics in characters of different nationalities. This anxiety is suggestive of nostalgia for a world where the myth of the superior English sailor ruled the oceans, yet Geoffrey’s near-assimilation into the cursed crew allows him to see as spectre, and from this vantage point observe the true horrors of progress; automatisaton and the irrevocable changes it imposes on the seafaring profession.

The constant references in *The Death Ship* to English and Dutch sailing ability and Geoffrey’s apparently clear moral superiority are complicated by the theatricality of the events. At first glance,

²² Jan Assman, *Moses the Egyptian: The Memory of Egypt in Western Monotheism* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), p. 9.

it seems the numerous references to 'masquerade' and 'carnival' are meant to ridicule the foreign dress Geoffrey is forced to wear. The theatricality of the situation implies a temporary make-believe where the roles of protagonist and antagonist are reversed. The celebrated heroic English sailor has unexpectedly been made into a spectacle and spectator. The circumstances under which Geoffrey is made to wear these clothes points towards anxiety about agency and national identity.

After falling overboard his own ship and being rescued by the crew of the cursed ship the *Braave*, Geoffrey is given clothes to wear until his own have dried. He is given a motley of ancient clothes that have been on board for literally ages. Accumulated over the last century and a half from ships of various nationalities, these clothes are of nondescript, likely foreign origin. They have been given to Geoffrey by the cursed Dutchmen. The clothes are seen as emphatically not English and instead represent foreignness. His new wardrobe consists of 'warm knitted stockings, breeches of an old pattern, and a coat with a great skirt embellished with metal buttons, several of which were missing, and the remains of some gold lace upon the cuffs. In addition, there was a clean linen shirt, and a pair of South American hide boots, fawn-coloured' (Russell, *Death Ship*, 97). From this initial description, there seems to be nothing wrong with the clothes themselves. To Geoffrey, however, it is 'like clothing [him]self for a masquerade to dress in such things' (Russell, *Death Ship*, 97). Although he is grateful to be wearing something dry, Geoffrey says that '[his] costume made [him] feel ridiculous enough' (Russell, *Death Ship*, 99), 'like a fool in a carnival' (Russell, *Death Ship*, 133).

The conflicting temporalities on board the cursed ship are unsettling and complicate the intercultural relationship between Geoffrey and his hosts. He is no longer the authoritative second mate he was on his own ship. The other English guest on the Dutchman's cursed ship, Imogene Dudley, also wears clothes from the Dutchmen's cargo, described as 'a costly *theatrical* wardrobe by reason of the variety of the styles, representing fashions from the middle of the seventeenth century down to within twenty years of the time in which happened what I am here relating' (Russell, *Death Ship*, 196; emphasis added). The clothes forced on her do not fit; one silk gown is 'plain and very full, as though made for a bigger woman' (Russell, *Death Ship*, 116). Imogene seems

to disappear in the clothes made for bulky Dutch women. The implied theatricality of Geoffrey's and Imogene's foreign clothes are a possible nod to what Simone Natale calls the 'theatrical character' of public spiritualist séances where 'the medium played the role of the performer, and the sitters the role of spectators'; it is implied that the two English protagonists, communicating with the undead, need to perform in their roles of demure guests, while the reader as spectator, looks on.²³

If donning foreign dress is problematic, however, Russell also provides a partial solution. The physical features of Captain Vanderdecken, the cursed Flying Dutchman, are described as not entirely Dutch. This symbol of foreign immorality is described as having

a most noble port [...] such an elevation of the head, such disdainful and determined erectness of figure, as made his posture royal. There was not the least hint in his face of the Dutch flatness and insipidity of expression one is used to in those industrious but phlegmatic people. His nose was aquiline, the nostrils hidden by the moustachios which mingled with his noble Druidical beard (Russell, *Death Ship*, 91).

The aquiline or Roman nose, described in 1848 by George Jabet in *Nasology: or, Hints towards a Classification of Noses*, 'indicates great Decision, considerable Energy, Firmness, Absence of refinement, and Disregard for the *bienséances* of life'.²⁴ Other illustrious owners of aquiline noses are, allegedly and amongst others, Rameses II, the Duke of Wellington, King Canute, William III, Queen Elizabeth I, Columbus, Washington and Henry VII, the 'well-known, because (as their Noses likewise attest) strongly marked, characters of these persons render it unnecessary to allude even briefly to their biographies' (Jabet, 31). Described as a 'pocket book geared to the masses', *Nasology* voices, albeit in only semi-serious terms, the generally accepted notion of physiognomy.²⁵

Physiognomy was a theory used to identify in-born criminality and degeneration as well as racial inferiority, and found its way into the literary market primarily through detective fiction

²³ Simone Natale, *Spiritualism and the Rise of Modern Media Culture* (University Park PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2016), p. 2.

²⁴ George Jabet, *Nasology: or, Hints towards a Classification of Noses* (London: Richard Bentley, 1848), p. 22.

²⁵ Sharrona Pearl, *About Faces: Physiognomy in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2010) p. 49.

(Karschay, 27). It suggests that a person's character can be read from their facial features, with some suggesting righteous, honourable character traits, others indicating a criminal, degenerate nature. Russell also uses it to distinguish between nationalities; although in life, English and Dutch people resemble each other, in his fiction they do not. English characters tend to be good-looking, reflecting their moral superiority, whereas the Dutch have a 'flatness and insipidity of expression' characteristic of their, in Russell's view, subordinate nature (Russell, *Death Ship*, 91). The mixing of these traits, then, makes a person unreadable. Vanderdecken's aquiline nose indicates noble qualities that are not out of place in a captain, but it simultaneously implies lack of refinement and propriety. If the morally upright traits stand for Englishness, and the more questionable traits suggest foreignness, Vanderdecken contains a duality that is not easily solved.

The descriptions also evidence doubleness regarding foreignness and Englishness of both past and present. The adjective 'druidical' invokes an idea of authority and wisdom, but it is an authority that is associated with paganism, 'bloody sacrifices and dark and horrible mysteries'.²⁶ Vanderdecken embodies an amalgamation of cross-cultural, cross-temporal authorial figures of menace *and* benevolence. Geoffrey describes Vanderdecken's unnatural eyes that have 'the cruel brilliance in them such as may be noticed in the insane' and his sallow, corpse-like countenance (Russell, *Death Ship*, 108). Vanderdecken does not bear any of the characteristic 'Dutch flatness and insipidity of expression' (Russell, *Death Ship*, 91). The noble stature makes him Geoffrey's double, a more savage copy that is like but not exactly like him.

Through this doubling the problem of the foreign wardrobe is partially solved. It does not reinstate Geoffrey's agency as English protagonist but making Vanderdecken resemble an English captain implies comforting similarity between the two nationalities. Geoffrey even grudgingly admires Vanderdecken's sailing ability: 'Curse or no curse [...] Vanderdecken knows his business, and call me a Dutchman if here has not been a noble stroke of seamanship' (Russell, *Death Ship*, 413). The cursed captain is as good a sailor as any Englishman. Vanderdecken is partially culturally

²⁶ Ella Rodham Church, 'Footprints of the Druids', *The Aldine*, 8 (1876), 90–91; p. 90.

appropriated by the English author, as though the uncontested skills of this cursed sailor can only belong to an Englishman. In this sense, Vanderdecken resembles an Englishman more than Geoffrey resembles a foreigner, and the threat of assimilation is largely removed. Vanderdecken is still enough of a villainous foreigner within to not completely upset the delicate balance between the two maritime powers. Geoffrey, although outwardly resembling a foreigner through the clothes which 'occasioned a wretched feeling as of belonging to the ship', inwardly retains his moral superiority over actual foreigners (Russell, *Death Ship*, 148).

Although initially represented as crisis, Geoffrey's near-assimilation in the cursed crew loses its urgency by this duality. The theatricality of Geoffrey's initial encounter with the cursed crew is reversed when he goes from spectacle to spectator, and his remarkable passivity is used to investigate the nature of the supernatural events more closely. This role-reversal enables Geoffrey to see as ghost, observing but not physically interfering with the narrative determined by the Dutchman's curse. The ghost gains materiality and the real person is incapacitated by seeing; the Dutchman turns out to be real, but Geoffrey's agency as Englishman and narrative protagonist is removed. The passive nature of Geoffrey's spectatorship and his lost agency suggest he should be read in spectral terms. Imogene presses on Geoffrey the importance of being passive onlookers:

In this ship especially must we be as mute as spectators only, for we are two living persons standing amid shadows, and viewing so marvellous a mystery that I tremble to the depth of my soul at the thoughts of my nearness to the Majesty of an offended God! (Russell, *Death Ship*, 141).

Their investigation of the marvellous mystery requires a reconceptualization of the laws of nature in order to understand the supernatural. It begins by seeing, the physical perception of the supernatural, but is not limited to it. The encounter with the supernatural affects the whole body; the spectator experiences a wide range of mental and physical reactions to apparitions. As such, seeing a ghost spans the whole spectral encounter. It is not limited to the physiological mechanics of vision, as Srdjan Smajic has argued. He suggests that the nineteenth-century ghost story 'covertly invokes a form of spectatorship that meets the ghost on its own spectral terms', these

terms being the ungraspable mechanics of seeing (Smajic, 1110). Without intending to, Geoffrey meets the supernatural on its own terms; though it is surprising for the heroic English sailor to find himself in a position of powerlessness, this makes it possible to reverse the spectral terms and to see *as* ghost.

Elaine Freedgood asserts '[i]f the dominant mode of Victorian fiction – realism – relies on visibility, legibility, and thoroughgoing epistemological closure, the ghost story questions the evidence of sight, the possibility of reading that evidence accurately'.²⁷ When it comes to the supernatural, seeing is not necessarily understanding. Geoffrey and Imogene evoke this sense of failed observation. Despite many discussions about the nature of the curse and the ways in which it affects Vanderdecken, the crew and his ship, no definite understanding of the supernatural events is reached. This allows for wild speculation on many seafaring matters; among the subjects of discussion are the usability of the spectral ship's guns, the supernatural material of the ship, and the, in Geoffrey's eyes unnecessary, fighting instinct of the cursed men (Russell, *Death Ship*, 252–53; 303; 344). In almost all cases, the conclusion is along the same lines: 'The truth about this ship is not known [...] and it never can be known, because her influence is dreaded' (Russell, *Death Ship*, 195).

Nevertheless, Geoffrey is committed to understand the workings of the supernatural ship. His approach is fragmentary, focusing on disparate elements rather than the ship in its entirety. The fractured glimpses of the supernatural add to the sense of otherness, and ultimately, Geoffrey fails to truly understand how the Dutchman's curse works. Smajic argues that '[s]upernatural fiction [...] should be subtly provocative rather than declarative, suggestive rather than bluntly explicit' (Smajic, 1111). He follows Walter Scott, who argued in his 1827 essay 'On the Supernatural in Fictional Composition': 'The marvellous, more than any other attribute of fictitious narrative, loses its effect by being brought much into view. The imagination of the reader is to be excited if possible, without being gratified' (Scott, 62). If we are able to completely perceive and understand

²⁷ Elaine Freedgood, 'Ghostly Reference', *Representations*, 125 (2014), 40–53; p. 45.

the ghost rather than merely catch an occasional glance, the supernatural is simply not effective.

Seeing is believing, but what is seen must remain just out of sight in order to be horrific.

The not-quite seeing, not-quite understanding of the cursed Dutchman and his ship suggest the legendary figure is ultimately unknowable. His existence in *The Death Ship* confuses the physiognomy paradigm in which nationalities are linked with certain character traits presented on people's faces. The cursed sailors on the spectral ship are creatures of their time and place: Geoffrey remembers 'the brutal character of the Dutch of those times, and remember that Vanderdecken and his men belonged to that age, and would therefore have the savagery which one hundred and fifty years of civilization, arts, and letters have somewhat abated in the Hollanders' (Russell, *Death Ship*, 322–23). Most of the cursed crew exist in the same chronotope of seventeenth-century Dutchness. Descriptions of Vanderdecken, with his amalgamation of national and physiognomical characteristics, suggest he is an anti-chronotope, representing neither a particular place nor a particular time. Complicating notions of national identity suggest there is not much difference between nationalities; Dutchman is both English and foreign. This is an uncomfortable realisation and suggests Russell's Vanderdecken is horrifying exactly because of this unreadability: 'few experiences are more terrifying than encountering the unreadable in a world we thought we could read, the unknown in a world we thought we knew'.²⁸

Geoffrey cannot remain completely detached from the supernatural events on the spectral ship. He feels what he calls a harmless 'seaman's curiosity' towards the workings of the ship (Russell, *Death Ship*, 148). This type of inquisitiveness is explained early in the narrative as 'the sort of curiosity a man might feel who follows a sheeted figure at night, not liking the job, yet constrained to it by sheer force of unnatural relish' (Russell, *Death Ship*, 14). This suggests that the maritime supernatural has an uncanny influence over Geoffrey, compelled to investigate the supernatural mysteries. The sailor-spectator is harmless, presumably because he is unable to physically interfere with the object of his scrutiny. This incapacity might work in Geoffrey's favour;

²⁸ Kevin J. Hayes, 'Visual Culture and the Word in Edgar Allan Poe's "The Man in the Crowd"', *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, 56 (2002), 445–65; p. 465.

as long as he can keep his distance, he does not seem to be horrified by the unnatural events.

Whenever he does physically interfere with his subjects, by shaking their hands or through direct dialogue, horror and disgust creep over Geoffrey. These sensations silence him into retreat:

“Let your country rig its ships as it chooses, they will find the Dutch know more about the sea and the art of navigating and commanding it than your nation has stomach for.”
I could have smiled at this, but *the voice of the man, the deadness of his face, the terrifying life in his eyes, the sombre gravity of the others, standing about me like people in their sleep*, were such a corrective of humour as might have made a braver man than I am tremble. I dared not go on talking with them, indeed, *their looks caused me to fear for my senses*, so without further ado I walked aft and entered the cabin hoping to find warmth and recovery for my mind in the beauty and conversation of Imogene. (Russell, *Death Ship*, 159; emphasis added)

Geoffrey abandons the automaton-like, somnambulistic sailors in fear of losing his mind, and replaces them with the reassuring sentience of Imogene. The lack of humanity in the unnatural, cursed men makes it impossible to converse or interact with them. Geoffrey tries to appeal to their shared occupation, and supposes that conversation between these ought to be natural, particularly when this conversation is about rigging and other ship-related topics: Geoffrey encourages dialogue by saying that ‘I am a sailor, and I love to hear the opinions of persons of my own calling’ (Russell, *Death Ship*, 158). The supernatural prevents identification between Geoffrey and the cursed sailors, who do not recognise him as a fellow sailor. Indeed, as will be discussed, the uncertain ontological status of the cursed sailors is not only part of the horror effect but also allows for the expression of concerns about the future of seafaring.

There appears to be a remarkable pointlessness to the anxiety around national identity expressed in *The Death Ship*. Russell quickly solves the anxiety that arises from Geoffrey’s near-assimilation by describing his protagonist in spectral terms. This allows for a closer investigation of the practical seafaring problems posed by the maritime supernatural. Russell initially affirms the myth of the superior English sailor, but the supernatural, warped temporality of the cursed ship seems to erase national differences and solve the problem of near-assimilation. Seeing as ghost allows for a close look at spectral sailors, which enables Russell to address the socio-economic status of sailors. At the same time, Geoffrey’s passivity in itself is an expression of anxiety of

national identity; the English sailor, despite his curiosity, is unable to grasp the narrative events and is swept along by the supernatural. Geoffrey's incapability of interacting with these supernaturally mechanical shipmen indicates a more important discourse in *The Death Ship* about dispensability of human interaction in the workplace in light of industrial changes.

In 1966, Lewis Mumford wrote: 'Instead of functioning actively as an autonomous personality, man will become a passive, purposeless, machine-conditioned animal whose proper functions, as technicians now interpret man's role, will either be fed into the machine or strictly limited and controlled for the benefit for de-personalised, collective organizations'.²⁹ Mumford articulates a fear that had pervaded society since the period of industrialisation began in the late-1700s. Man would become a passive cog in the machine that was dubbed progress. No longer functional parts of society, humans take on characteristics of the machines they so mindlessly operate. This fear was still present in the late-nineteenth-century. In *The Death Ship*, the cursed crew themselves represent the other kind of passivity that permeates the narrative. The curse has given their movements occasionally 'the lifeless air of an object controlled by mechanism' (Russell, *Death Ship*, 163). These episodes are explained as a kind of power outage in which the death within them overcomes the mysterious power that seems to keep them alive.

These intervals of temporary mechanical motion are exemplary of what Fiona Coll calls 'a larger nineteenth-century concern about the fate of human subjectivity in an increasingly rationalized, systematized world'.³⁰ The concern voiced in maritime literature speaks to the industrialisation of the maritime space. Over the course of the century, there was less need for physical labour on board ships and more for automatised, mechanical labour that required less manpower. Nineteenth-century industrialisation gave rise to concerns about the longevity of the mariner's craft. The critical discourse on maritime life and labour often mentions the dying world of sail, and the transition to steamships and the nostalgia associated with the loss of the sailing ship. It

²⁹ Lewis Mumford, *The Myth of the Machine: Technics and Human Development* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1966), p. 3.

³⁰ Fiona Coll, "'Just a singing-machine': The Making of an Automaton in George du Maurier's *Trilby*", *University of Toronto Quarterly*, 79 (2010), 742–63; pp. 743–4.

is the overused but little investigated stock phrase “nostalgia for the age of sail” that I want to take apart and attempt to clarify. The loss was clearly felt by Russell, who celebrated ‘[the] sense of being at one with the sea, embracing, living with, and adapting to its elements through skill and fortitude’, a feeling that is ‘alien to the world of steam’ (Nash, 97). Nostalgia ‘for the fast vanishing age of the sailing ship doesn’t just pervade Russell’s writing, it saturates it’ (Nash, 97). At the same time, however, Russell’s particular nostalgic view is complicated by his pessimistic view of the future, not only the present.

If nostalgia is considered as an expression of a collective anxious consciousness which ‘is characteristically convinced that it is born of the present, its nerves attuned to a future stirring in the conditions of the moment’, it is inconceivable that the discourse of nostalgia is restricted to the present and the past, because the future is embedded in both.³¹ In Russell’s particular expression of nostalgia in *The Death Ship*, as will be discussed, there is not only a sense that the past is shaped by the present, but also that the pastness within the present is currently shaping the future.

Svetlana Boym, in her study *The Future of Nostalgia*, defines nostalgia as a longing for a lost home, dependent on ‘the modern conception of unrepeatable and irreversible time’.³² The anxiety embedded in the irreversibility of time causes a longing for the past one cannot return to. The progress that took place at the time of Russell’s writing, rapid industrialisation and technological progress instilled in him a longing for the past. Although progress itself is focused on ‘improvement of the future, not reflection on the past’, there was no prospect of improvement in Russell’s eyes (Boym, 10). He expresses awareness of the impossibility of a return to sailing ships, an awareness that results in the unwanted present continuing irreversibly into an even less wanted future. The present situation is already disliked, and the future, though its details are unknowable, does not hold much promise. Polishing the past was his way of remembering something that was doomed to disappear, and question the prospect of an undesirable future.

³¹ Jane Goodall, ‘Transferred Agencies: Performance and the Fear of Automatism’, *Theatre Journal*, 49 (1997), 441–53; p. 442.

³² Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), p. 13.

Cesare Casarino notes a striking contradiction between the nineteenth-century sea narrative and the world it emerges from, showing how,

if the world of the sea, whose practices and centrality to political economy was largely inherited from an older mode of production, suddenly became an indispensable element in the emergence and consolidation of a new mode of production and of its imperialist enterprises, the nineteenth-century sea narrative was an archaic form of representation that suddenly began to perform according to new narrative structures and to fulfil new cultural imperatives, and that, hence, played a direct role in the production of the emergent cultures of modernity (Casarino, *Modernity*, 5–6).

In Casarino's view, it is particularly what he calls the modernist sea narrative that addresses this crisis of modernity embodied in the sea narrative. The modernist sea narrative 'is structured [...] around [...] the sea voyage and the world of the sea' (Casarino, *Modernity*, 9). It attempts 'at once to record the old and envision the new', to 'produce the most advanced forms of representation of the emergent future and its new social relations' (Casarino, *Modernity*, 10). Russell attempts the same in his nostalgic sea narratives, but in his maritime supernatural tale, his conception of new ways of seafaring is disturbed. Through the sailor-as-automaton, the nostalgia for the age of sail voices particular concern for the future of seafaring labour.

Minsoo Kang, in his 2011 study of automatons in European imagination, considers the automaton not only as physical object, but also as a conceptual tool used to '[meditate] on both the possibilities and the consequences of the breakdown of the distinction between the normally antithetical categories of the animate and the inanimate, the natural and the artificial, the living and the dead'.³³ Kang discusses the anxiety felt at the thought of machines taking on characteristics of a living creature as well as the equally frightening idea of humans becoming like a machine. The terms of his study accommodate the maritime supernatural. Kang's understanding of the automaton is 'a self-moving machine built for the specific purpose of mimicking a living creature' (Kang, 7). Usually these are figurines of musicians, dancers or animals, but as a conceptual object,

³³ Minsoo Kang, *Sublime Dreams of Living Machines: The Automaton in the European Imagination* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011), p. 7.

the automaton is usually translated into two manifestations; the machine-as-man, where machines behave human-like, and the man-as-machine, where humans take on machine-like qualities.

The second half of the nineteenth century, Kang argues, saw ‘an outpouring of literary portrayals of steam- or electricity-driven machines taking on characteristics of living creatures’ (Kang, 225). While in the Romantic period these living machines were seen as ‘the possibility of latent, supernatural Spirit realising itself through Matter’, by the middle of the nineteenth century fantastic writing had become informed by ‘the ongoing advancement of industrial technology and its impact on human society and identity’ (Kang, 225). Kang shows that, while some literary depictions of machine-as-man were positive, some negative ones ‘imagin[ed] the machines as powerful monsters representing the inexorable and destructive force of modernity itself’ and ‘others [saw] the mechanized worker as the representation of dehumanization in the industrial environment’ (Kang, 232). Writing in the context of land-based factories, Kang speaks about industrial machines and factory workers. These machines are unmistakable replacements for humans who themselves take on characteristics of the machines they operate.

In *The Death Ship*, the machine-as-man foreshadows the man-as-machine. When Geoffrey is introduced to the cursed ship and her crew, he is confronted with two automatons, which foreshadow the cursed crew’s plight. The clock strikes with an ominous ‘hollow, cathedral-like sound’, and Geoffrey looks over ‘just in time to witness the acting of an extraordinary piece of mechanism’ (Russell, *Death Ship*, 95–96). From the clock emerges

the figure of a skeleton, *imitated to the life*, holding in one hand an hour-glass on which he turned his eyeless sockets by a movement of the head, whilst with the other hand he grasped a lance or spear that, as I afterwards perceived, he flourished to every stroke of the clock-bell, as though he pierced something prostrate at his feet (Russell, *Death Ship*, 96; emphasis added).

This is followed by Vanderdecken’s parrot’s uncanny cry of ‘Wy zyn al verdomd’ (we are all doomed) – the old-fashioned Dutch printed in Gothic lettering. The figure of the skeleton is terribly, strangely lifelike. The imagery is not very subtle; with his hourglass the skeleton is reminiscent of *memento mori* paintings of the seventeenth century, reminding the reader of the

brevity of life.³⁴ The reference to *memento mori* is ironic: cursed to live forever, it would do Vanderdecken good to remember death. The parrot's cry, recalling the damnation Vanderdecken and his crew find themselves in, indicates a connection between these automatons and the cursed sailors, mechanical men in suspended animation

Later, Vanderdecken demonstrates another automaton, a present for his daughter. The apparent importance of this moment is reflected in the chapter's title. Although this is a very short scene in the 500+-page novel, the chapter is called 'I am shown a Present for Margaretha' or 'Vanderdecken shows me his present for little Margaretha' (the running heads say the former, whereas the actual chapter title says the latter). Even in the chapter itself, 18 pages long, the passage barely covers two pages. This scene is quoted in the 1888 review in the *Graphic*, where the reviewer comments that '[f]ew things in fiction are more touching than where, grim, stern, and accused as [Vanderdecken] is, he shows his unwilling guest the toy he is bringing home to his little girl at home, who must have been dead and buried half a century ago' (*Graphic* 989). The scene shows Imogene bringing out a small figurine of a fluteplayer, and Vanderdecken,

putting down his pipe, took a key from under the cloak of the figure and wound the automaton up as a clock, when it instantly lifted the flute to its mouth, *in the exact manner of life*, and played a tune. The sound was very pure though piercing, the melody simple and flowing. In all, the figure played six tunes without any sound of the clock-work within, and it was undoubtedly a very curious and costly toy (Russell, *Death Ship*, 130; emphasis added).

It is a homely scene; it is easy to imagine Vanderdecken as an indulgent father winding up the toy for his two eager children. The scene is evidently an example of Russell's attempts to humanise the

³⁴ 'Memento Mori' in *Tate Online Glossary*, [accessed 3 March 2016] <<http://www.tate.org.uk/learn/online-resources/glossary/m/memento-mori>>.

See also Harry Morris, 'Hamlet as a *Memento Mori* Poem' in *PLMA* (1970); Morris highlights the most important elements of the *memento mori*-poem, most relevant of which here is that 'present in imagery or diction is the reminder of death, most often a fleshless skull but sometimes other imagery the purpose of which is to remind a sinner of the latter end of his body' (p. 1035). Skulls and skeletons are obvious *memento mori*-icons, but the hourglass too has been mentioned as representative of the passing of time. See Jeannie Łabno, 'Child Monuments in Renaissance Poland' in *The Sixteenth Century Journal* (2006), and Jean-Pierre Barricelli, 'Refractions of a Knight: Nikos Gatsos in Relation to Dürer and Picasso' in *South Atlantic Review* (1997).

cursed Vanderdecken, which was appreciated by several reviewers. Yet the figurine, so life-like with its 'very easy and natural posture', seems out of place in the cursed ship (Russell, *Death Ship*, 130). The sound is pure and pierces the gloom of the 150-year-old ship. Unlike the skeleton, the fluteplayer is an innocent toy. Its appearance, like the skeleton in the clock's, is concluded with the ancient parrot's uncanny cry, once again announcing the crew's damnation.

The connection between the actual automatons and the cursed crew is not only forged by the parrot's cry, but also through semantics. Variations on the verb 'to pierce' connect the skeleton and the fluteplaying automatons with the cursed Vanderdecken. The skeleton mechanically moves his spear to 'pierce something prostrate at his feet', and the flute-player's 'pure though piercing' sound resonates through the cabin (Russell, *Death Ship*, 96; 130). Vanderdecken, meanwhile, is repeatedly described as having 'extraordinarily piercing and passionate' eyes, as having a 'piercing gaze' (Russell, *Death Ship*, 108; 226). The repetition of 'pierce' and 'piercing' forges a subtle connection between the machine-as-man, and its uncanny twin man-as-machine.

By the 1870s, the future held both the promise and the threat of mechanised labour. Industrialisation saw human labourers rapidly replaced by machines. Kang shows how in Victorian literature, industrial machines quickly took over from human labourers, who were eventually identified by only their own labouring properties – their hands (Kang, 233–34). Men and women in mid-nineteenth-century literature became extensions of the machines they operated. In *The Death Ship*, it is not a direct interaction with machines that makes men machine-like. Instead, the curse of the Flying Dutchman forces those who are affected by it – the captain, the crew and the ship itself – to act mechanically and, explicitly, automaton-like. They become machine-like because a greater force compels them. Initially described as moving in a 'self-engrossed, nay, entranced air', crew members are soon seen as moving like 'a marionette [with the] lifeless air of an object controlled by mechanism' (Russell, *Death Ship*, 151; 163). Their labour too is described as mechanical; Vanderdecken is seen 'watching in a soulless manner the automaton-like motions of the men engaged in hauling the line in and reeling it up' (Russell, *Death Ship*, 230).

Geoffrey is mostly ignored by the crew members. Eyes glide over him unseeing and he

himself becomes like a ghost. The crew only wake up from their trance if they are interacted with directly, resembling machines which are only set in motion once they are turned on. Geoffrey passes Vanderdecken on numerous occasions without being observed, but when he actively approaches a group of sailors in order to thank them for rescuing him, they awaken from their trance: 'He did not smile – showed himself, by not so much as a twitch in his face sensible of my speech, save that in the most lifeless manner in the world he held out his hand, which I took; but I was glad to let it fall. If ever a hand had the chill of death to freeze mortal flesh, his had that coldness' (Russell, *Death Ship*, 155).

What seems to stand out most to Geoffrey is the unnatural silence that pervades the ship, whether the men are working or in their death-like trance. The usual sounds of labour are silenced by the curse: 'The sailors went to work with true Dutch phlegm and deliberateness [...] walking round without a song, sullen and silent. There was no liveliness – none of the springing and jumping and cheerful heartiness you would expect in a crew who, after battling through six dismal days of black winds and lashing seas, were now looked down upon by a Heaven of stars' (Russell, *Death Ship*, 203). The crew perform labour, but

the affrightening element – more terrible than the hellish glarings upon the planks, bulwarks and masts, more scaring than the amazing suggestions – to a sailor's eye – of the old guns, the two boats and all other such furniture as was to be embraced in that gloom – was the crowd of glimmering faces, the mechanic postures, the graveyard dumbness of the body of spectral mariners who surveyed the boarding party in clusters, shadowy and spirit-like (Russell, *Death Ship*, 370; emphasis added).

Unexpectedly and horrifyingly, there is no sound that would usually accompany the labour – sounds of labour are still there but not the human sounds.

Russell interrogates the effect of the curse on seafaring labour by moving the narrative onto the cursed ship. It is a sensible question: if a cursed ship is able to move against the laws of nature seemingly on her own accord, what happens to the men on board who prior to the curse were essential in keeping her afloat and on course? This question recalls concerns about the future of labour in view of the inexorable rise of the steamship. The steamship, like the spectral ship in

maritime supernatural fiction described as representing 'a defiance of the natural order' and 'an affront to nature', clearly presented concerns for the future of seafaring labour (Mack, 99–100). It is notable that Russell himself did not sail on steamships during his seafaring career; all of his voyages were done in sailing ships (Nash, 18). Though his own experience did not extend to steam, which in any case did not become mainstream until after Russell had retired from the merchant service, his continued interest in the seafaring world meant he realised fewer men were needed and long experience on board ships was no longer a prerequisite

The curse, much like the idea of industrial progress, disrupts the sense of community that pervades life on board ships and creates a culture of unwanted individualism. The fraternity among sailors thrives on collaboration. Long-standing experience, so important in preceding centuries, lost its significance. The work itself simplified and smaller crews could be taken on board, resulting in an uncannily empty ship sailing without obvious displays of labour (Foulke, 'Life', 115). The fore-castle fraternity stood to lose its significance as experience-sharing, yarn-spinning community. Labour itself becomes a product and 'a worker's personal agency was not only compromised but potentially eradicated by mechanical activity'.³⁵ The way the past is imagined can also be telling of how the future is conceptualised in the present. Virginia Zimmerman has shown that 'preservation over time also promises continued significance for the present: if we remember, even metaphorically revisit, the past through its remains, then we can look to the future and imagine the present similarly remembered'.³⁶

Material remains, notes Zimmerman, are traces, and cursed sailors are possibly the most visceral traces of history one can encounter. This is particularly the case for sailing ships, described by Robert Foulke as 'relics of the past' (Foulke, 'Life', 105). They are displaced in time (not necessarily in place – they are still at sea), but removed from their own temporality, the sailors' original meaning is damaged (Zimmerman, 116). The time in which the Dutchmen are displaced is,

³⁵ Rebecca F. Stern, 'Moving Parts and Speaking Parts: Situating Victorian Antitheatricality', *ELH*, 65 (1998), 423–49; p. 431.

³⁶ Virginia Zimmerman, "'The Weird Message from the Past': Material Epistemologies of Past, Present, and Future in the Nineteenth Century', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 42 (2009), 114–35; p. 116.

moreover, their future. If they represent, as I interpret them, a form of seafaring now extinct, displaced in the future, Russell shows their skills have declined too much to be still productive. If the meaning of seafaring, particularly in Russell's perception, is to engage fully with shipboard labour and benefiting from the fraternity of the forecastle community, once displaced in the anonymised, mechanised future, seafaring's original meaning, a 'specialised world of experience' is damaged (Foulke, 'Life', 106). In *The Death Ship* seafaring has been reduced to the mechanical basics of hauling and pulling.

Compleat agency, the fully-informed and knowledgeable ability to act, is undermined by the anonymising and dehumanising of labour. The increasing distance between labourer and product created an impersonal work place. For sailors, the forecastle fraternity lost its importance. Polishing and perfecting skills collectively receded into the background, replaced by a smaller workforce that no longer needed to work side by side. Cohen notes '[a]nother element of this degradation was the wholesale abstraction of labor as part of capitalist commodification. When labor itself became a commodity, the experience of labor was emptied of significance, flattened, and quantified' (Cohen, *Novel*, 144). Labour itself becomes a product in itself, particularly when automatons and machines are allowed to supersede humans. It becomes a commodity – skill no longer solely constitutes labour. We see both Russell's longing for a romantic past *and* a fear of further deterioration of what it means to be a sailor, in his expression of what could be called a double or comparative nostalgic gaze.

This double gaze, Kelly Mays has demonstrated in her 2011 article on the use of the word 'Victorian' by Victorians themselves, was used often and in self-reflexive manner in the Victorian age. It evidences the Victorian awareness of how 'the future alone ultimately possesses the power to determine the shape of the present-turned-past it will remember'.³⁷ In other words, there was an awareness that the future is not only shaped by what occurs in the present but also how the future shapes memories of the present-day Victorian age, which by that time will have become the

³⁷ Kelly J. Mays, 'Looking Backward, Looking Forward: The Victorians in the Rearview Mirror of Future History', *Victorian Studies*, 53 (2011), 445–56; p. 446.

past. This is different from a purely nostalgic view because the double gaze shows awareness of both positive and negative elements of the present whereas a nostalgic view would polish the memory of the present-turned-past until the negative elements disappear. Mnemohistory, moreover, interpreted as remembering the useful past rather than the actual past, overlooks the relationship between past and future.

A true sailor is formed in the rigging of sailing ships, not in the boiler rooms of steamships. This sentiment was perhaps most famously voiced by Joseph Conrad in his 1920 essay 'Memorandum on the Scheme for Fitting out a Sailing Ship for the Purpose of Perfecting the Training of Merchant Service Officers Belonging to the Port of Liverpool'. In 'Memorandum', Conrad shows he is aware the age of sail is in irreversible decline but nevertheless argues for the importance of training future officers on board sailing ships. These ships have an 'ease of handling, quickness in manoeuvring, and even in point of actual safety' cannot be beaten by the steamships.³⁸ Real sailors and officers are shaped, not by training them on 'the most modern sailing ship (which in any case is doomed to failure and need not be taken into consideration at all), but to select for them the *best* period of sailing-ship practice and service' (Conrad, 'Memorandum', 69). There 'should be no labour-saving appliances in the shape of steam winches and so on; and [...] the hoisting of the sails, the working of the boats, and the general physical work of the sailors calling should be done by man power' (Conrad, 'Memorandum', 70).

Conrad's reasons for this are numerous – the number of hands on board is more than sufficient, physical labour erases any sense of superiority and most importantly, 'there is undoubtedly something elevating in physical work into which one puts all one's heart in association with others and for a clearly understood purpose' (Conrad, 'Memorandum', 70). Moreover, it will give the future officers an intimate knowledge of the ship's workings and gives rise to the development of 'a special mentality; in this case it would be the sailor mentality; surely a valuable

³⁸ Joseph Conrad, 'Memorandum on the Scheme for Fitting Out a Sailing Ship for the Purpose of Perfecting the Training of Merchant Service Officers Belonging to the Port of Liverpool' in *Last Essays* 1928 (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1955), 66–80; p. 67. Subsequent references are to this edition and are given in parentheses as (Conrad, 'Memorandum', page).

acquisition for a sea officer either in sail or steam' (Conrad, 'Memorandum', 71). Conrad's special mentality resembles Marryat's duty. The ship becomes a place that forges a particular kind of duty that extends from seafaring as occupation. What gets lost in the mechanisation of sea labour is this sensibility of duty.

Russell's the cursed crew call for an awareness that technological progress in seafaring is damaging and permanent. They do not escape their curse, they find no absolution and by the end of the novel it is suggested their plight will continue without end. Shifting the gaze to the seafaring world shows how the discourse of nostalgia, so prevalent in considerations of the maritime world, when in turn brought to bear on seafaring *labour*, changes to a double gaze that imagines the past as more than a time when everything was better. By looking at the threat of mechanised labour, the dispensability of the experienced worker and the unstoppable modernisation of the maritime world, we see a space opening up for a new kind of maritime supernatural fiction that leaves the machinery of the sea behind to give preference to bodiless ghosts.

5.3 'A feeling which is elusive at all times and has no permanent hold upon us'³⁹

There are some obvious similarities between Russell's two maritime supernatural novels; in both cases, the antagonists are foreign, the protagonists suffer from physical or mental isolation at sea and suspended animation is the explanation for the supernatural longevity of the uncanny antagonists. The maritime supernatural in *The Frozen Pirate* establishes the novel's uncanny atmosphere. The supernatural creates a dynamic of uncertainty which moves with the narrative. The supernatural moves from locus to locus rather than remain in place; whereas the initial sense of horror comes from the Antarctic landscape, upon the discovery of the frozen pirates the Antarctic is normalised and the uncanny bodies become the focus of the horror instead.

³⁹ J.F.R., 'The "Flying Dutchman" Revival', 1895, p. 574.

The sense of discovery this movement contains, removes the nostalgia for the age of sail with which Russell has almost been synonymised. *The Frozen Pirate*, unlike most of Russell's fiction, is not nostalgic because it is preoccupied with understanding the supernatural events. This is not the case in *The Death Ship*, where the conditions of the maritime supernatural are predetermined by the Flying Dutchman legend. As a force that drives the narrative Russell's maritime supernatural is politicised, concerned with the socio-economic prospects of sailors. Russell associates the Dutchman legend with the complicated status of seafaring labour, and he expresses this anxiety through his fiction.

By the time of Russell's writing, a sense of saturation seems to have reached the maritime supernatural genre, and particularly new interpretations of the Flying Dutchman legend begins to fall out of fashion. This becomes evident not only from some of the reviews Russell received for *The Death Ship*, endlessly compared with Marryat's *The Phantom Ship* and even deemed wholly unoriginal by one review. It is perhaps most clearly expressed by a certain J.F.R. in his 1895 review of a recent production of Richard Wagner's opera *Der fliegende Holländer*. Aside from the vulgar acting and 'adipose' singers, the supernatural events were not convincingly conveyed.⁴⁰ This was, says J. F. R., due to the fact that '[h]orror of the supernatural is not very deeply rooted in us, after all' ('Revival', 574). He notes that

Modern training tends to eliminate it altogether. In later life Goethe could not call up a single delightful shiver. There are probably not half-a-dozen stories in the world from which we can get it a second time. At any rate, the unexpected must play a part in producing it, and the same means do not produce it twice with anything approaching the same intensity. Hence the Dutchman's phantom ship must be more ghostlike at each representation, its blood-red sails a bloodier red; and in the long run, do what the stage-carpenters will, we coldly sit and compare their work with previous ships. [...] we are acutely conscious that our feeling is more or less a laudable make-believe – a make-believe that requires some little effort ('Revival', 574).

⁴⁰ J. F. R., "'The Flying Dutchman' Revival' in *Saturday Review of politics, literature, science and art* 80.2088 (2 November 1895), 574–75; pp. 574–75.

Ghostly tales *no longer* produce the same effect in the reader who, due to their '[m]odern training', are no longer affected by supernatural tales the way they had been before. To J.F.R.'s dismay, this development seems to force the author, playwright or stage-manager to conjure up more extreme scenarios, describe even more dramatic scenes and inevitably descend into the realm of pulp. J.F.R. describes an apparently general sense of 'we have seen it all' that affects nineteenth-century audiences. The modern audience is aware that all they see or read is make-believe, and, due to the modern reliance on reason, it has become very difficult to instil a sense of delightful horror. Reason seems to have become a threat to the supernatural; it prevents the reader from enjoying horror stories the same way as before, and it prevents the author from writing and selling effective ghost stories. In the early-twentieth century, William Hope Hodgson's sea narratives defied reason in his sea fiction, which stepped away from existing maritime lore and remythologised the maritime space with monsters largely of his own creation.

Chapter 6: William Hope Hodgson: remythologisation, weird fiction and modernity.

Around the time of William Clark Russell's death in 1911, a new sailor-author specialising in supernatural stories entered the literary scene. William Hope Hodgson went to sea as a fourteen-year-old and sailed for eight years before his first short story was published in 1904.¹ Unlike his predecessors Frederick Marryat and William Clark Russell, Hodgson did not write novelised yarns. Rather than reiterate maritime legends, Hodgson remythologised the sea. Hodgson entered the literary field dominated by popular ghost story writers Algernon Blackwood and M.R. James, and, in the field of maritime fiction, Marryat and Russell were still regularly republished.² Contemporary reviews for Hodgson's work show it was well-received and appreciated; as a regular contributor to popular magazines and periodicals, his work was widely read.³ Later commentators, H. P. Lovecraft in particular, disliked Hodgson's 'pseudo-archaic English [...] – a cursed hybrid jargon belonging to no age at all', but lauded the writer's engagement with cosmic horror.⁴

It is not the case, however, that Hodgson completely rejected maritime myths. Emily Alder has argued that Hodgson 'transforms traditional legends and superstitions of ghosts, ship spirits,

¹ Brian Stableford, 'William Hope Hodgson' (1985) in *William Hope Hodgson: Voices from the Borderland* eds. Massimo Berruti, S. T. Joshi, Sam Gafford (New York: Hippocampus Press, 2014), 45–55; p. 46.

² The British Library holds the following late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century editions of *The Phantom Ship*: three published by Routledge in 1874, 1880 and 1895, and one published by The Botley Head in 1906 with a preface by William Clark Russell. It holds one republication of *The Death Ship*, printed in 1901 by Chatto and Windus. Moreover, David Hannay published his biography of Marryat in 1889, and Andrew Nash in his 2014 *William Clark Russell and the Victorian Nautical Novel* cites, among other items, an 1896 interview with Russell in *Pall Mall Gazette*, and his extensive bibliography of the author shows he was still publishing novels into the 1900s; showing the late-Victorian presence of both authors (Nash 186; 215).

³ A. Langley Searles, 'William Hope Hodgson: In His Own Day' *William Hope Hodgson: Voices from the Borderland* eds. Massimo Berruti, S. T. Joshi, Sam Gafford (New York: Hippocampus Press, 2014), 27–33; p. 28.

See also Mike Ashley, *Age of the Storytellers: British Popular Fiction Magazines 1800–1950* (London and New Castle: British Library and Oak Knoll Press 2006), pp. 81–6 for more information on *The Grand Magazine*, to which Hodgson was a regular contributor.

⁴ H. P. Lovecraft, letter to August Derleth, 6 November 1934; quoted in Marcos Legaria, 'R.H. Barlow's "A Memory" in William Hope Hodgson's *The Night Land*' in *William Hope Hodgson: Voices from the Borderland* eds. Massimo Berruti, S. T. Joshi, Sam Gafford (New York: Hippocampus Press, 2014), 198–204; p. 202.

phantom ships, and the world beneath the waves to create his own corpus of sea horror literature'.⁵ Unlike Marryat and Russell, who follow the predetermined narrative of the Dutchman legend, Hodgson 'reworks old legends with a modern worldview, often transforming traditional tales into stories of horror, revising legendary encounters with sea monsters, ghosts, and ghost ships for terrifying effects' (Alder, 'Dark Mythos', 57). Using elements of disparate maritime legends and stories, Hodgson's tales constitute a body of work reminiscent of Frankenstein's monster, made up of different parts to create a new whole.

Also unlike Marryat and Russell, Hodgson's own experience of seafaring is not emphasised in the stories and novels themselves. His seafaring experience appears to have had a negative effect on Hodgson's later perception of maritime life and culture. He expressed his views in a 1905 article 'Is the Mercantile Navy Worth Joining?' (also known under the alternative title 'Why I Am Not At Sea'), writing 'I am not at sea because I object to bad treatment, poor food, poor wages and worse prospects. I am not at sea because very early I discovered that it is a comfortless, weariful and thankless life – a life compact of hardness and sordidness such as shore people can hardly conceive. I am not at sea because I dislike being a pawn with the sea for a board and the shipowners for players'.⁶ Hodgson is not nostalgic for his time at sea, nor does he anticipate a negative future for shipboard labour. Instead, he embraces the modernisation of seafaring and is critical of certain habits of maritime culture, particularly yarn-spinning and the close-knit nature of the forecastle fraternity.

This chapter considers Hodgson's contribution to the maritime supernatural genre of the long-nineteenth century. If the genre is understood as a celebration of sailor fraternity on board ships, shipboard labour and yarns through withstanding the supernatural together, Hodgson's work

⁵ Emily Alder, 'The Dark Mythos of the Sea: William Hope Hodgson's Transformation of Maritime Legends' in *William Hope Hodgson: Voices from the Borderland* eds. Massimo Berruti, S. T. Joshi, Sam Gafford (New York: Hippocampus Press, 2014), 56–72, p. 56. Subsequent references are to this edition and are given in parentheses as (Alder, 'Dark Mythos', page).

⁶ William Hope Hodgson, 'Is the Mercantile Navy Worth Joining?' in *The Grand Magazine*, 7 (1905), 30–34; p. ?. Quoted in Peter Tremayne, 'Introduction' to *Masters of Terror 1: William Hope Hodgson* (London: Corgi Books 1977), p. 10.

does not seem to fit this description. It is distinctly different from Marryat's and Russell's in both theme and narrative tone focusing on the bodily horror found in sea monsters and inexplicable mutations that occur in the desolate sea in informal, first-person narratives. It is critical of maritime lore and practices such as yarn-spinning. While the haunting that takes place on Hodgson's ships affects the whole crew, the successive narrative events show disagreement within the fore-castle fraternity and a distinctly sceptical view on maritime lore and yarn-spinning. This critical stance on maritime culture adds a new and distinctly modern dimension to the maritime supernatural genre. This chapter will first contextualise William Hope Hodgson in the literary field by considering contemporary reviews of his work. I will then discuss Hodgson's depiction of life and labour on board ships. Finally, I will focus on the nature of haunting in his 1909 novel *The Ghost Pirates*. Doing so will help prove that the sense of 'we have seen it all' so prevalent in the late-nineteenth century forced maritime supernatural literature to take another direction.

Hodgson was a sailor for eight years. Signing on as a cabin boy aged fourteen in 1891, the years spent at sea were difficult. Eventually obtaining his third-mate's certificate, he left the merchant service and opened a school for physical culture in Blackburn (Stableford, 45). Despite his apparent issues with many aspects of life at sea, it still featured prominently in much of his work. His literary career started in 1904 with the publication of 'The Goddess of Death', a land-based murder mystery story. His first maritime story was published a year later. The narrative, 'A Tropical Horror', relates a gigantic sea monster's attack on a ship.⁷ His first critical success was 'From the Tideless Sea', published in 1907 (Alder, *Borderlands*, 21). A review for the short story collection *Men of Deep Waters* (1914) which saw previously published short stories including 'From the Tideless Sea' republished were positive, with a review in the *Glasgow Herald* noting that '[i]n these stories of the sea Mr. Hodgson worthily maintains a well-won reputation of strength in the qualities

⁷ Emily Alder, *William Hope Hodgson's Borderlands: monstrosity, other worlds, and the future at the fin de siècle*. PhD thesis: Edinburgh Napier University, 2009 <<http://researchrepository.napier.ac.uk/3597/>>, p. 20. Subsequent references are to this edition and are given in parentheses as (Alder, *Borderlands*, page).

of imagination, mystic beauty and spiritual force' (Langley Searles, 32).⁸

Having created a literary presence with his short stories published in periodicals, his novels were positively received and reviewed. For a better understanding of William Hope Hodgson's place in the literary field and his use of the maritime world despite his ambivalent attitude towards it, I have looked at reviews published between September and October 1909 to look at the reception of *The Ghost Pirates*. One of only four novels he published, and the third instalment of a loose trilogy connected only by the supernatural themes, *The Ghost Pirates* is the most thematically relevant work for this thesis. It will be discussed in detail below; here, reviews of the novel will be helpful in understanding the maritime element of Hodgson's work, as contemporary reviews for his short stories do not exist.

An early review, published in the *North Devon Journal* on 9 September 1909, simply states: 'The ghost pirates (by William Hope Hodgson), a realistic ghost story'.⁹ The adjective 'realistic' is the extent of the judgment of this reviewer, and the realism of the novel is voiced in other reviews as well. The *Manchester Courier* comments on the novella's mysterious author, and that

It would be interesting to know whether Mr. William Hope Hodgson has long been, or whether he is just becoming, a tale writer of the very first rank of ability. Writers of tales are not so many in these days, when everybody with money enough to buy a fountain pen has a novel up his sleeve: and very few indeed of the writers of tales that there are, are really good craftsmen. But on the strength of this one book, Mr. Hodgson has a right to be numbered among the most honourable company.¹⁰

Hodgson is unknown to the reviewer, although the author's preface to *The Ghost Pirates* states that the novel is 'the last of three' in what should be seen as a loose trilogy of narratives: 'though very different in scope, each [...] deals with certain conceptions that have an elemental kinship' (Hodgson, *Ghost Pirates*, 11). The overarching theme signified by these conceptions, the

⁸ Langley Searles does not provide a full reference with publication details for the *Glasgow Herald* review, and I have been unable to find it as the digitised archive only goes up to 1900 [accessed 28 August 2016] <gdc.galegroup.com/gdc/artemis?p=GD&u=unisoton>.

⁹ Review of *The Ghost Pirates* in *North Devon Journal* (9 September 1909), p. 2.

¹⁰ Review of *The Ghost Pirates* in *Manchester Courier* (1 October 1909), p. 9.

overwhelming sense of cosmic horror, is important. The maritime setting seems secondary. The reviewer's insistence on good writers being craftsmen cements Hodgson's reputation as a skilled writer, someone who is to be taken seriously and not dismissed as a popular author for the masses. Storywriting is no longer restricted to an elite group, and the resulting flow of novels seems to contain more pulp than quality. Hodgson, however, is a craftsman, evidently worthy of the highest praise.

Hodgson's maritime career is guessed at in a September 1909 review in the *Dundee Courier*, where the reviewer remarks that '[t]he language of the sailor men and the work on board ship are evidently thoroughly familiar to the author' – although again the reviewer does not seem to know much about Hodgson himself.¹¹ The review moreover praises the quality of the supernatural in the book: 'It is an excellent specimen of the sort of book which should be read late at night in a lonely house in order to experience the full effect of its creepiness' (*Dundee Courier*, 7). This suggests an urban readership, and moreover indicates this yarn was written to appeal to an individual. Unlike real maritime yarns, Hodgson's tale was not particularly written to be shared in the forecastle community. It evidences that Hodgson distanced himself and his tale from the maritime culture he drew on for inspiration.

A review in the *Aberdeen Journal* also comments on the ghostly qualities of the narrative, calling it 'horribly and fascinatingly gruesome and creepy'.¹² It outlines the novel's underlying theories about the supernatural at sea – giving away the ending somewhat in the process – and ends with the remark that the author 'does not explain how the demons have at their command the elemental forces of nature, which are generally supposed to be in other keeping. The story, however, is gruesome and exciting enough to satisfy the most sensational appetite' (*Aberdeen Journal*, 3). The comments on the lack of explanation about the larger workings of the supernatural and divine are abandoned in order to assure readers that *The Ghost Pirates* is still a good read. For the purpose of the review, the assurance that the ghost story is effective in instilling fear in the

¹¹ Review of *The Ghost Pirates* in *Dundee Courier* (22 September 1909), p. 7.

¹² Review of *The Ghost Pirates* in *Aberdeen Journal* (18 October 1909), p. 3.

reader is clearly very important.

A final review printed in the *Western Daily Press* most explicitly illustrates how *The Ghost Pirates* could be situated in the literary field: 'it is full of wierd [*sic*] incidents, favouring of a nautical element. Sailors are notoriously superstitious, and many are the ghost-like yarns put to their credit, but "The Ghost Pirates" provides new sensations and incidents of the supernatural world hitherto unpublished'.¹³ It is a novel that will be enjoyed by readers of ghost stories, and its place is primarily within the supernatural genre rather than maritime fiction. Simultaneously, however, it is noted that while maritime superstition and particular novelised yarns are well-known, *The Ghost Pirates* is different.

As discussed in preceding chapters, novelised yarns, derived from an existing body of maritime lore had been successful and were still widely popular by the beginning of the twentieth century. Hodgson, as emerges from contemporary reviews, wrote the maritime world differently. *The Ghost Pirates* presents the reviewers with a new type of supernatural literature of unprecedented sensations. It also allows another side of maritime literature to emerge, although this is not explicitly noted in the reviews; that of explicit, incomprehensible horror. The 'nautical element' of the weird incidents comes second to the novel's ability to convey horror. The mention of weirdness in the *Western Daily Express* is of particular interest. To be defined by H. P. Lovecraft in his 1927 essay *Supernatural Horror in Literature* – 18 years after the publication of the *Western Daily Press* review of *The Ghost Pirates* that describes Hodgson's work as "weird" – weird fiction must contain

[a] certain atmosphere of breathless and unexplainable dread of outer, unknown forces [...]; and there must be a hint, expressed with a seriousness and portentousness becoming its subject, of that most terrible conception of the human brain – a malign and particular suspension or defeat of those fixed laws of Nature which are our only safeguard against the assaults of chaos and the daemons of unplumbed space (Lovecraft, 15).

¹³ Review of *The Ghost Pirates* in *Western Daily Press* (27 September 1909), p. [3?].

The dread expressed in Hodgson's work, in keeping with Lovecraft's description of weird fiction above, is inexplicable. Preceding Lovecraft's definition, however, some of the 1909 reviews already remark on the inexplicability of *The Ghost Pirates*. The *Aberdeen Journal's* review points out, for example, that *The Ghost Pirates* never fully explains, in accordance with natural laws, how these ghost pirates can control the weather. While they see it as an unresolved issue, a plot hole of sorts, what is missing from these reviews, crucially, is the feeling that 'we have seen it all' that was implied in some reviews for Russell's *The Death Ship*. Instead, the originality of Hodgson's short stories was recognised. Their format worked in favour of their effectiveness; the three-part novel became to be seen as too long to carry the audience's interest. Hodgson's short stories and short novels were better suited to the genre of supernatural maritime fiction (Alder, *Borderlands*, 53).

Aside from their successful format, Hodgson's short stories drew on his own seafaring experience in new and challenging ways. Alder argues that Hodgson used his experience at sea to add richness to horror narratives through reworking of existing maritime myths. He 'taps into a literary and artistic tradition using supernatural tropes of the sea, which help shape his fiction' (Alder, 'Dark Mythos', 56–57.) Hodgson transforms maritime legends into horror stories by 'recasting [...] the supernatural within a new materialist framework' related to late-nineteenth-century views of spiritualism and the occult, resulting in new meanings of the legends (Alder, 'Dark Mythos', 57). Hodgson's ghostly stories are sometimes intended to debunk the myths they are based on. His experience with maritime life and interest in spiritualism saw him rewrite these legends into fiction, using well-known elements such as haunted ships (real or imagined, or ambiguous), derelicts and foreboding weather (Stableford, 45).

Several stories use sailors' notorious superstition, and either resolves it rationally or leaves the explanation ambiguous' whereas others are explicitly critical of superstition and show they can be damaging 'with no suggestion of the supernatural' (Alder, 'Dark Mythos', 58–59). The sea, Alder argues, is the ultimate in-between place, 'a quintessentially liminal region', and Hodgson's particular treatment of legends by reworking them, drawing two worlds closer together, makes the sea the best locus for horror (Alder, 'Dark Mythos', 59). Nature behaving abnormally not only

announces the supernatural but also reinforces its position as in-between place of life and death.

Hodgson uses his own experience 'to establish atmosphere and suspense', to anticipate storms or the supernatural (Alder, 'Dark Mythos', 60).

Alder's mention of Hodgson's experience highlights elements of his fiction she does not examine, namely that of shipboard life and labour, or maritime culture. The emphasis in current academic writing on Hodgson's work is on the horror, the fantastical and the weird, and it is argued that his maritime experience creates believability. It adds richness and atmosphere, but maritime culture does not play an active, decisive role in most of Hodgson's narratives (Alder, 'Dark Mythos', 60). Hodgson's work is mostly considered to be horror literature, or weird fiction, but I would like to argue that part of his oeuvre is written in line with the maritime supernatural genre. He is a sailor-author whose sea stories are based on his own professional experience working and living on ships, experiences that were rewritten into narratives appealing to a land-based audience. The conversational tone and the use of the first-person narrative perspective duplicates yarn-spinning. The reader takes part in the yarn-spinning ritual.

Hodgson is little-known today, and there is a notable lack of scholarship on the author. Scholarship that does exist tends to come from a select group of academics, often publishing together. Although work on Hodgson is scarce, it is thorough nonetheless, lauding the author's groundbreaking use of horror. This means his maritime experience is often neglected and suggests the depiction maritime culture in Hodgson's work is incidental. A consideration of Hodgson's description of maritime life and work, however, shows a changed attitude to maritime superstition and fraternity in the early-twentieth century in relation to the nineteenth century. Hodgson's particular lack of nostalgia and critical view of certain practices commended by his predecessors will be considered in what follows in order to discuss this changed perception of seafaring and the experience of being haunted at sea. I will now turn to a selection of Hodgson's tales in order to demonstrate his perception of maritime culture and his literary engagement with maritime experience.

6.1 Hodgson's short stories

Although research on Hodgson tends to gloss over his engagement with maritime culture in his writings, as an experienced sailor his treatment of maritime culture is informed and, importantly, critical. His criticism of maritime culture is important because, despite Russell's and Marryat's campaigning for better seafarer's rights, their novels still celebrate the unity of the forecastle fraternity and the beauty of seafaring in the age of sail. Hodgson does not follow them in this glorification of maritime life.

The short story 'The Wild Man of the Sea', first published in 1926, after Hodgson's death in 1918, taps into the Jonah myth, demystifying it by highlighting the negative impact of yarn-spinning. Although Alder considers this story has 'no suggestion of the supernatural', the story's dramatic conclusion in double murder is the direct result of acute belief in the supernatural (Alder, 'Dark Mythos', 59). The supernatural is there, even if it is discounted and denounced by the author. While yarn-spinning here is still used to help those in the forecastle fraternity make sense of seemingly unnatural events, the reader's sympathy is directed towards the Jonah of the story rather than the uncomprehending crew. The result is an unsettling reversal of reading fraternity, where the horror arises from the natural events rather than the supposedly supernatural events or unnatural knowledge perpetuated by the Jonah figure. The narrative suggests that the crew's collective actions – turning into a violent mob after becoming convinced one of the sailors brings bad luck to the ship – is unfortunately natural. The social aspect of this event is dangerous; no individuated antagonist is identified but instead it is the crew as a whole who live the potential dark side of this culture.

The Jonah of 'The Wild Man of the Sea' is Jesson, an accomplished sailor who is signed on and 'became almost at once, by general acknowledgment, the leading seaman of the port watch'.¹⁴ Jesson's ability is related without much explanation to a landlubber-reader. Jesson

¹⁴ William Hope Hodgson, 'The Wild Man of the Sea' (1926) in *Adrift on the Haunted Seas: The Best Short Stories of William Hope Hodgson* ed. Douglas A. Anderson (New York: Cold Spring Press, 2005), 105–16; p. 105.

was evidently soaked in all the lore of the sea life and all its practical arts. Nineteen different ways of splicing wire he demonstrated during one do-watch argument, and from such practical matters went on to nautical fancywork, showing Jeb, the much-abused deck boy belonging to his watch, a queerly simple method of starting a four-stranded Turk's-head, and after that he demonstrated a manner of alternating square and half-moon sennit without the usual unsightliness that is so inevitable at the alternations (Hodgson, 'Wild Man', 105).

Jesson is initially assimilated in the crew through his understanding of maritime lore and the sailor's craft. This manner of description of labour without pause for explanation for the uninitiated is what Margaret Cohen called 'active description'; the use of maritime terminology unexplained for landed readers as described in her 2003 article 'Traveling Genres'. The reality effect of this active description, argues Cohen, abolishes 'the distance between readers on land and the culture of the sea' – although historically, Marcus Rediker argues, his speech is exactly what *distinguished* the sailor from non-sailors (Cohen, 'Traveling Genres', 489; Rediker, *Deep Blue Sea*, 11). Hodgson's use of maritime vocabulary is ambiguous; rather than bring the landed reader closer to the maritime action, he creates distance by the impenetrable description, though at the same time demonstrating Jesson's exceptional ability. Jesson is unreadable for the reader; it is clear that he is a skilled seaman, but unfamiliarity with the usual and inevitable unsightliness of these knots distances the landed reader. His know-how creates a barrier through which we seem unable to truly see him.

The reader is brought closer to the anonymised crew through Hodgson's ambiguity. The not-quite seeing or understanding this skilled character is a trait shared between the reader and the fictional crew, bringing the reader closer to the sea and involuntarily identifies with the hostile crew. Despite his skills and clear physical strength, Jesson 'was not popular in the fo'c's'le' (Hodgson, 'Wild Man', 106). There is something inaccessible about him. It is not made clear what exactly provokes the crew's hostility but classifying him as Jonah makes Jesson an accursed figure. His skilfulness initially saves him from the crew's unfounded superstition: 'had not his seamanship and his fighting powers been so remarkable he would have been stamped by his insensate fellow A.B.'s [able-bodied seamen] as hopelessly "barmy"' (Hodgson, 'Wild Man', 106). It is never

explicitly said what turns the crew hostile; their apparent unwarranted dislike is unreasonable, illustrating the narrative's emphasis on the negative impact of superstition.

The shipboard community becomes divided when the ship is becalmed and the voyage 'abnormally prolonged' (Hodgson, 'Wild Man', 107). This gives rise to further hostility towards Jesson, who 'had grown steadily more and more unpopular, being less and less understood by those smaller natures and intellects. [...] It was the inevitable, half-believed imputation of a "Jonah," and as will be understood, they omitted none of their simple and strictly limited adjectives in accentuating the epithet' (Hodgson, 'Wild Man', 107). The superstitious crew are not described in favourable terms and their beliefs are shown to be dangerous 'because of the very ignorance that bred it and made it brutal' (Hodgson, 'Wild Man', 112). Bad luck haunts the ship as two crew members die, and, in a storm, Jesson is attacked by the crew, now a 'huddle of fighting men', a violent crowd no longer made up of individuals, stabbed and thrown overboard (Hodgson, 'Wild Man', 115). Jeb, the cabin boy, tries to rescue him but he too is forced overboard and drowned.

The violence involved in dispensing with Jesson and Jeb occurs out of sight; 'something was being heaved up in the gloom' to come down again and again on 'a man' (Hodgson, 'Wild Man', 115). Jeb enters the fighting huddle with an iron belaying pin and his use of this device are the only violent acts explicitly shown. The crew, now 'a black, struggling mass of men', do not perform individual acts of violence. Jeb has 'a strange inner consciousness that told him knives were being used', knives that are never actually seen by either him or the reader (Hodgson, 'Wild Man', 115). An 'unheard splash over-side among the everlasting seas' tells Jeb that Jesson has been thrown overboard but this is never seen. Similarly, Jeb himself is 'swiftly [...] gripped by fierce, strong hands, and a few minutes later the *Pareek*, sailing ship, was storming along in her own thunder', leaving Jesson and Jeb behind to drown – or already drowned – in the stormy sea (Hodgson, 'Wild Man', 115).

'The Wild Man of the Sea' illustrates a negative side of maritime culture. Hodgson, who had been the victim of bullying while on board himself, clearly did not experience yarn-spinning as a unifying and uplifting practice that created an unequivocal sense of fraternity (Alder, *Borderlands*,

16–17).¹⁵ The yarn-spinners in this story are not challenged on the violence they incited with their talk; the story ends with the implication that ‘both the [first] mate and the master suspected something of the truth that they could neither voice nor prove’ (Hodgson, ‘Wild Man’, 116). The hierarchical relationship between captain, mates and crew is overturned as the violent crowd of seamen, directed by their perceived previous experience with Jonah-figures, take measures into their own hands. Experiential authority is exercised but also condemned by the narrative. Although the crew leaves the ship without pay out of guilt, in subsequent voyages they spin their yarn again, telling the story ‘to believing and sympathetic ears. And foolish, ignorant heads nodded a sober and uncondemnatory assent’ (Hodgson, ‘Wild Man’, 116).

The hostile crew in ‘The Wild Man of the Sea’ spins their yarns in exactly the way expected of them; they speak from their own prior experience in order to understand frustrating natural phenomena, in this case the becalming of the ship. In doing so, they create a community that is literally in the same boat, which unitedly stands up to the negative element, or the perceived Jonah. The narrative condemns the violence emanating from this superstition while the beautiful side of seafaring is not understood by this crowd. Jesson, sharing his experience with Jeb, tells him:

Have ye ever thought, Jeb, what a mysterious place the sea is? [...] I want ye to think about it, lad. I want you to grow up to realize that your life is to be lived in the most wonderful and mysterious place in the world. It will be full of compensations in such lots of ways for the sordidness of the sea life, as it is to the sailorman. [...] It’s a place where you could meet God Himself walking at nights, boy. Never pattern yourself on sailormen, Jeb. Poor devils! (Hodgson, ‘Wild Man’, 108).

Jesson is not trusted by the crew because of his aesthetic sensibility; while the narrative shows this sensibility is balanced with his practical knowledge, Jesson appears unbalanced to the rest of the crew. Jesson’s sea eye has become distorted; although it is usually finely balanced between physical and mental forms of labour, as Hester Blum argues, Jesson seems to favour intellectual

¹⁵ Paraphrased from Alder’s quote from William Hope Hodgson, ‘Physical Culture: A Talk with an Expert.’ 1901. *The Uncollected William Hope Hodgson*. Ed. Sam Gafford. Vol. 1 of 2 (Bristol, RI: Hobgoblin Press, 1995), 12–14; p. 13.

activity over the practical mechanics of shipboard labour (Blum, 109–12). The beauty of seafaring, it seems, comes not from the sense of fraternity as a result of sharing a living space with others, but from the solitude and beauty provided by the sea itself; the opposite of community feeling. Hodgson shows the shipboard fraternity has a lethal capacity for violence. Jesson's apparent resistance towards the shipboard fraternity and fatal result of his alienation are corrective of the arguments made by Rediker, Blum and Cohen, who all argue that yarn-spinning leads to an inclusive solidarity, a stronger sense of community in the seafaring world: to paraphrase Rediker, one which ensured survival through sharing practical information and forging bonds (Rediker, *Outlaws*, 10). Hodgson's fiction contradicts this interpretation of yarn-spinning; it accomplishes what historical study fails to do which is not only to deepen the relationship between the crew and the individual, but also to present a space where these two perceptions of the shipboard community interact.

A more neutral view of yarn-spinning is taken in 'An Adventure of the Deep Waters'. Initially published in 1913 as 'The Thing in the Weeds', it was reworked and republished under its new name in 1916. The story's first sentence, 'This is an extraordinary tale', might suggest engagement with the supernatural, but the apparently unnatural events on board ship are finally explained by the appearance of a giant squid.¹⁶ However, until the moment of explanation the crew attempt to classify the strange events by comparing them to previous experiences on other voyages. The narrator, the ship's third mate, is walking the decks with the first mate when they come across a bad smell, something 'faint and sickly, yet vaguely suggestive of something I had once smelt before' (Hodgson, 'Deep Waters', 137). They see nothing, and the first mate spins a yarn that compares their current situation with a prior experience:

"I'll tell you what it smells like, Mister," the Mate remarked once, "and that's like a mighty old derelict I once went abroad in the North Atlantic. She was a proper old-timer, an' she gave us all the creeps. There was just this funny, dank, rummy sort of smell about her, sort of century-old bilge-water and dead men an' seaweed. I can't stop thinkin' we're nigh some

¹⁶ William Hope Hodgson, 'An Adventure of the Deep Waters' (1916) in *Adrift on the Haunted Seas: The Best Short Stories of William Hope Hodgson* ed. Douglas A. Anderson (New York: Cold Spring Press, 2005), 137–47; p. 137.

lonesome old packet out there; an' a good thing we've not much way on us" (Hodgson, 'Deep Waters', 138).

Hodgson's use of yarn-spinning here appears to prepare the reader for the coming of supernatural events – but these events never come. The story suggests that 'horrors of all sorts [can] be conceived to emerge from the darkness', but when lighted properly, these horrors resolve themselves into a natural explanation.¹⁷ Linking the smell to 'a proper old-timer', a sailing ship, in other words, implies that superstition is a thing of the past. There is no place for it in the modern, iron-hulled windjammers Hodgson sailed in. Unlike Marryat's or Russell's yarn-spinning, the yarn spun in 'An Adventure of the Deep Waters' does not mirror the subsequent narrative. The source of the smell is no derelict or ghostly vessel, and comes from the giant squid that makes itself known at the end of the story.

Hodgson's use of yarn-spinning, when he uses it explicitly, is different on purpose because he is critical and weary of it. In these narratives, it is implied that the supernatural does not occur despite the yarns spun by the crew. The experience of being haunted at sea, Hodgson tells us, is the result of archaic, out-dated beliefs that are harmful to individual sailors singled out by the rest of the crew. The crew, in turn, transform into a violent mob – yarn-spinning compromises the harmony within the forecastle fraternity. In narratives that do explicitly deal with the supernatural, however, the practice of yarn-spinning is largely absent. As will be discussed, in these stories the horror is so acute and immediate, there is no room for discussing previous experiences. When it comes to really dealing with the supernatural, Hodgson's characters take up arms, rather than passively discuss the possibility of monsters appearing.

A more explicitly supernatural tale is 'Demons of the Sea', first published in 1923 in *Sea Stories Magazine*. The narrative events are clearly supernatural, and yet, remarks S. T. Joshi, they

¹⁷ S. T. Joshi, 'Things in the Weeds: The Supernatural in Hodgson's Short Stories' in *William Hope Hodgson: Voices from the Borderland* eds. Massimo Berruti, S. T. Joshi, Sam Gafford (New York: Hippocampus Press, 2014), 73–83; p. 76. Subsequent references are to this edition and are given in parentheses as (Joshi, 'Things', page).

are 'dispatched – or, at any rate, dispersed – with cutlasses and pistols'; in other words, they are disposed of by worldly means rather than something supernatural (Joshi, 'Things', 79). The ship of protagonist "Darky" runs aground on what 'appeared to be a mass of seaweed, but fell back into the water with a sullen plunge as though it were something more substantial. Immediately after this strange occurrence, the sun set with tropical swiftness, and in the brief afterglow things assumed a strange unreality'.¹⁸ The water around the ship is near-boiling and soon she is surrounded by thick mist. Experience is shared to lessen the tension; the second mate states that 'I've seen things in fogs before, but they've always turned out to be imaginary' (Hodgson, 'Demons', 149). This is not the case here, however; the yarn does not have its desired effect of subduing the nerves as

suddenly something long and black slid past us into the fog astern. From there rose four indistinct and ghostly towers, which resolved themselves into spars and ropes, and sails. [...] So ghostlike, unreal, and fleeting had been our glimpse of the stranger, that we were not sure that we had seen an honest, material ship, but thought that we had been vouchsafed a vision of some phantom vessel like the *Flying Dutchman* (Hodgson, 'Demons', 151).

The ship that appears slowly has all the characteristics of a classic ghost ship. She moves despite the absolute silence of the becalmed sea, and is crewed by horrible creatures that, '[i]n spite of their unearthly strangeness there was something vaguely familiar about them' (Hodgson, 'Demons', 153). They are half-man, half-seal with 'long, snaky feelers' for arms that end in talons instead of hands (Hodgson, 'Demons', 153). They are not seen to sail the ship, which seemingly moves by herself.

The characteristics of a classic ghost ship are used here, as the ship moves on its own accord manned by a crew made up of creatures not recognisably human. However, it is difficult to argue that the ghostly aspect is in some way related to sailors losing agency over their labouring bodies. Hodgson's creatures are here to instil horror in the reader, not to make a political point about the

¹⁸ William Hope Hodgson, 'Demons of the Sea' (1923) in *Adrift on the Haunted Seas: The Best Short Stories of William Hope Hodgson* ed. Douglas A. Anderson (New York: Cold Spring Press, 2005), 148–55; p. 148.

disappearance of shipboard labour. Their monstrous, hybrid bodies '[manifest] a symbolic threat to human identity' rather than a threat to a fading profession (Alder, *Borderlands*, 160). Their appearance is moreover described in racist terms; these 'parodies of human beings' have 'grotesquely human' faces of 'men among certain tribes of natives who had faces uncommonly like theirs, but yet no native I had ever seen could have given me the extraordinary feeling of horror and revulsion which I experienced toward these brutal-looking creatures' (Hodgson, 'Demons', 153). The monstrous sailors are unclassifiable 'because their bodies belong to multiple categories of identity, and they are found on the borders of our known world, in places or in discourses where they can belong to both reality and fantasy' (Alder, *Borderlands*, 148).

The vessel initially appears to be ethereal but gradually becomes more visceral throughout the experience. The crew attempt to dispose of the monsters with guns but they have no effect. Eventually, the crew escape thanks to a favourable wind that forces the ghost ship to stay behind. A warning ends the narrative: 'Whether she still floats, occupied by her hellish crew, or whether some storm has sent her to her last resting place beneath the waves, is purely a matter of conjecture. Perchance on some dark, fog-bound night, a ship in that wilderness of waters may hear cries and sounds beyond those of the wailing of the winds. Then let them look to it; for it may be that the demons of the sea are near them' (Hodgson, 'Demons', 155). The reader is the audience for this yarn and the recipient of the warning. In the narrative itself, however, yarn-spinning has had no effect. The focus of the story is on the bodily horror of the monsters, not on the effect of their appearance on the cohesion of the crew. Hodgson does not use active description here; maritime details are overlooked for the benefit of the story's ability to horrify.

The experience of being haunted at sea in most of Hodgson's narratives focus on the bodily, physical horror of the experience rather than political or social implications of the apparitions. They do not upset the shipboard hierarchy, nor is their appearance predicted in yarn-spinning between the crew. Hodgson's new kind of maritime horror draws on myths but does not adhere to existing discourses around their cultural or political resonance. Lovecraft, discussing the weird tradition in Britain in *Supernatural Horror in Literature*, describes Hodgson's most famous works. Generally,

Hodgson's work is, according to Lovecraft, '[o]f rather uneven stylistic quality, but vast occasional power in its suggestion of lurking worlds and beings behind the ordinary surface of life' (Lovecraft, 82). Often, Hodgson's narratives contain 'malign marvels and accursed unknown lands', but then dwindle into 'painful verboseness, repetitiousness, artificial and nauseously sticky romantic sentimentality' (Lovecraft, 83–84). What often saves Hodgson is his maritime expertise. Hodgson's 'command of maritime knowledge' and 'the really profound nautical erudition everywhere' save them from mediocrity (Lovecraft, 83).

Thinking about Hodgson's short stories as part of the maritime supernatural genre complicates both his work and elaborates the capacity of the genre. Fulfilling the genre's requirements on the one hand – primarily written from experience, engaging with maritime culture and featuring unnatural events based on maritime legends, the stories follow a pattern set out by Marryat and Russell in the 1830s and 1880s. On the other hand, however, Hodgson's stories deviate from those of his predecessors: the reader is the primary recipient of the yarn, taking on the role of the green-hand who needs to be initiated. Yarn-spinning does not create the story-within-story that haunts the narrative as a warning. Stories with an unequivocal supernatural component focus on this rather than on maritime culture. However, the similar backgrounds of Marryat, Russell and Hodgson, all former seamen who continued their careers on land, and the maritime themes throughout both authors' writings suggest kinship rather than dissimilarity.

Hodgson's short fiction can roughly be divided into two types. On the one hand, and most prominently, he wrote stories that feature forms of unnatural horror. These stories are about bodily disfigurement and the particular terror of sea monsters. On the other hand, Hodgson wrote about the horror that comes from human behaviour and interaction; behaviour that is horrifying despite it simultaneously being seen as quite natural. These stories, unlike those about sea monsters, make use of Cohen's active description where nautical idiom is used without explanation. The use of active description accentuates Hodgson's engagement with maritime culture and his refusal to engage with nostalgia for the age of sail. It is impossible to say with certainty whether this division between either monsters or maritime culture is intentional or simply

the result of the short length of these stories – quite likely it is a combination of both. It is certain, however, that in the novel *The Ghost Pirates* (1909), maritime culture and unequivocal supernatural phenomena come together.

6.2 *The Ghost Pirates* (1909)

The difficulty of classifying *The Ghost Pirates* within one genre is evident from contemporary reviews discussed above. Like most of Hodgson's stories, the novella is not based on one particular maritime legend. *Unlike* the short stories, however, *The Ghost Pirates* is less critical of maritime culture, and focuses more on reinventing the maritime supernatural as a place where different dimensions come together. The novella starts with protagonist Jessop, who begins his tale 'without any circumlocution' (Hodgson, *Ghost Pirates*, 17). Written in the first person, *The Ghost Pirates* relates the haunting on board the ship *Mortzestus* by human-shaped figures that grow increasingly hostile.

Hodgson invents his own lore, which suggests the ship is open to invasion from different dimensions, invisible to anyone. This, Alder notes, was one way in which Hodgson 'redefined [sea ghost stories] by *fin-de-siècle* occult and spiritualist theories' (Alder, *Borderlands*, 129). Spiritualism in particular is concerned with accessing another world, and *The Ghost Pirates* offers 'scientific, or at least physical' explanations for this (Alder, *Borderlands*, 75). Time and place are confused, and different chronotopes meet on the *Mortzestus*. An intersection of different dimensions, the ship becomes a place outside time and space, an anti-chronotope that contains the horrifying possibility of cosmic disorder.

The way in which this Hodgson's new lore is discussed in the novella is very similar to the way traditional maritime lore is dispersed among sailors – Jessop and Tammy share their experiences in order to understand the strange and unnatural events on board ship. However, there are key differences between yarn-spinning and these constructive dialogues that help characters understand the supernatural events. Yarn-spinning prepares its audience for

extraordinary or even supernatural events. These stories are based on past experiences. In dialogues, however, the experience that is shared is current, not past experiences. There is an acute need for processing the events.

In *The Ghost Pirates*, dialogues have clear psychological value. Jessop explicitly states that, after one of his encounters with a ghostly figure, '[he] need[s] someone to talk to' (Hodgson, *Ghost Pirates*, 53). By talking about their experiences, Jessop and Geoffrey in *The Death Ship* attempt to reassure themselves of their sanity. Geoffrey often remarks how he seeks out the company of Imogene, reassuringly alive, to avoid further conversations with the cursed undead who make him afraid of losing his senses. Jessop turns to the *Mortzestus'* apprentice Tammy, initially the only other person witness to the ghostly apparitions. The discussions help regain control of the situation and re-establish order in the chaotic shipboard world. Rationalism pervades; everything is classifiable and understandable. Ultimately, what permeates all factors is a wish to understand the unnatural events and to assert man's authority in the situation and on the subject.

Dialogues that attempt to forge an understanding of the unnatural events tend to be formulaic; they are held between the authoritative, male protagonist and a minor character playing the role of what Michael Macovski calls 'designated listener'.¹⁹ These characters 'essentially enable the rhetoric of interaction'; they have little to add to the conversation but enable the articulation of ideas (Macovski, 5). The reader is the ultimate designated listener, having no influence on the direction of the dialogue at all. In the narratives themselves, Macovski argues, the role of designated listener is often performed by a woman, child or the Other man (usually from another, lower, class).

This idea of the designated listener is contended by Anna Clark in her 2014 article 'Frankenstein, or the Modern Protagonist', where she claims that minor characters often contribute as much to our understanding of nineteenth-century texts through what she calls 'protagonism' (Clark, 245). She defines protagonism as 'the character systems of texts in which

¹⁹ Michael Macovski, *Dialogue and Literature: Apostrophe, Auditors, and the Collapse of Romantic Discourse* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 5.

many minor characters are imbued with rich consciousness through the application of narrative techniques such as free indirect discourse and focalization' (Clark, 245). In other words, minor characters, Macovski's designated listeners, contribute to a deeper understanding of the narrative through their sophisticated representation. These characters, 'who may lack descriptive substance but are nonetheless rich in personality, specificity, and interiority', occasionally take over the protagonist role (Clark, 246). Rather than a listener, these characters can also become speakers.

Macovski's designated listener can be equated with the green-hand in yarn-spinning; the blank slate who needs explanations in order to categorise events. The designated listener's passive role fits the green-hand, who has no experience and therefore no authority to speak on the matter at hand. Clark's protagonism fits more comfortably in the case of a dialogue, where two persons have equal opportunity to discuss events. A dialogue is not a monologue; Hodgson transforms yarn-spinning into a dialogue where two characters know the same facts, have the same experience, and attempt to interpret them. Jessop tells Tammy "'Go on, [...] I'll listen'", at which Tammy relates his own experience with the ghostly beings (Hodgson, *Ghost Pirates*, 52). Experiential authority as well as hierarchical authority usually prevalent in maritime supernatural narratives is erased as characters encounter something they have not seen before. Authoritative discourse is subverted by the men's incapacity to reach definite conclusions. Jessop often stresses the fact that he is not sure what he assumes is factually accurate or that he cannot know whether what he says is true. This is not evidence of authority; rather, it shows the other (the ghost) has won.

It is difficult to classify the *Mortzestus* as either haunted ship or ship that haunts. The haunting that goes on in this ship does not follow preset conventions. The ghosts are shapeless rather than tangible, and appear and disappear at will. They have no identity or history, and while the *Mortzestus* is said to be haunted from the first page, none of the crew really believe she is haunted, and when it becomes impossible to deny that unnatural events are taking place on board, they argue that 'She hain't haunted [...] Leastways, not like you mean' and that she *is* haunted, but 'not in that way' (Hodgson, *Ghost Pirates*, 50; 55). The haunting going on in *The Ghost Pirates*,

then, is unlike what we have seen before, shifting ‘continually between ghostly and physical presence’ (Alder, *Borderlands*, 142). This section demonstrates that the not-quite physical nature of the *Mortzestus*’ haunting allows for natural as well as supernatural interpretations of the unsettling events.

The exact reason for the ghostly appearances is never explained, but instead hovers in what Tzvetan Todorov calls the fantastic – the genre that hovers between the uncanny, meaning the events are an ‘illusion of the senses’, and the marvellous, where the event has really taken place in which case the ‘reality is controlled by laws unknown to us’.²⁰ Works within the fantastic genre support ‘two alternative readings’; until the reader discovers that the ‘agency behind all the recent disturbances is a supernatural being’, he oscillates between natural and supernatural explanations and is stuck in the fantastic.²¹ While Noël Carroll sees the fantastic genre as a precursor to the horror genre, the fantastic’s insistence on the unexplainable – a ‘certain atmosphere of breathless and unexplainable dread of outer, unknown forces’, as Lovecraft defined it – also links it firmly with weird fiction. Rather than a precursor, the fantastic is seen here as an element of weird fiction. Generating the fantastic, says Carroll, can be done ‘by narrating the evidence, at the sentential level, in terms of propositional attitudes that are epistemically weak’, in other words, tentative and conditional (Carroll, 151).

Hodgson employs exactly this conditional tone that places his work partially in the realm of the fantastic. At the dramatic ending of the novel when all the unnatural events culminate in a direct confrontation with the ghostly figures, Jessop describes how he suddenly is unsure of the reality of what he is seeing:

But, you know, what was getting at me more than anything was a feeling that there was movement down in the water there, among the rigging. I *thought* I could actually see, at times, things moving and glinting faintly and rapidly, to and fro in the gear. And once, I was practically certain that something was on the royal-yard, moving in to the mast; as though, you know, it might have come up the leech of the sail. And this way, I got a beastly feeling

²⁰ Tzvetan Todorov, *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre*. Trans. Richard Howard (New York: Cornell University Press, 1975), p. 25.

²¹ Noël Carroll, *The Philosophy of Horror, or Paradoxes of the Heart* (New York and London: Routledge, 1990), p. 145.

that there were things swarming down there (Hodgson, *Ghost Pirates*, 126; *emphasis* in original; emphasis added).

At the moment the ghostly beings come close to invading the ship, and are supposed to become more discernible, Jessop is no longer sure that what he sees is real or not. The passage imitates what it describes, and there is ambiguity in this vagueness. This makes it harder to categorise these ghosts and emphasises their supernatural quality; rather than becoming clearer, the beings' proximity makes them fainter and harder to grasp. The ghosts are unlike Jonathan Hyslop's spectral lascars, whose 'existence is ideologically anomalous and they [come] into focus when there [is] controversy about them, but otherwise, they [are] forgotten' (Hyslop, 213). The closer the lascars come to the (public) eye, the more defined they are. Not being talked about means becoming indiscernible. The ghost pirates, on the other hand, never become distinct, even when they board the ship.

The possibility of the ghosts lurking in the corner of our eyes *almost* brings them into focus. Just before the beings actually invade, Jessop sees more clearly, but it does not help him make more sense of them. He notes that

All along the port rail there was *a queer, undulating greyness*, that moved downwards inboard, and spread over the decks. As I looked, I found that I saw more clearly, in a most extraordinary way. And, suddenly, all the moving greyness *resolved into* hundreds of strange men. In the half-light, they looked *unreal and impossible*, as though they had come upon us the inhabitants of some fantastic dream-world. My God! I thought I was mad. They *swarmed in upon* us in a *great wave* of murderous, living shadows (Hodgson, *Ghost Pirates*, 131; *emphasis* added).

It is here that the fantastic seems to resolve into the marvellous; the ghosts cannot be explained by natural means and our and Jessop's perception of the world and its laws needs to be amended to accommodate for the existence of these ghosts. The appendix to the narrative proper, however, casts doubts on this resolution. Called 'The Silent Ship', it describes the events narrated by Jessop from the point of view of the ship that rescued him. Apart from the use of adjectives like 'queer', 'strange' and 'extraordinary', it never confirms that the events are supernatural. The exact nature of haunting that occurs on the *Mortzestus* remains unclear.

A comparison with Joseph Conrad's *The Shadow-Line* might be helpful in order to determine the kind of haunting we are dealing with, or at least exclude a type of haunting that *The Ghost Pirates* does not contain. Conrad's 1916 novella is perhaps even more unclear about the haunting that might or might not take place on board ship. While it might not have been Conrad's intention to invoke the supernatural in his narrative, first-time readers would certainly interpret passages of the book at least as spectral, if not supernatural. Conrad himself adds to the confusion in his Author's note, in which he states that his work 'was not intended to touch on the supernatural. Yet more than one critic has been inclined to take it in that way, seeing in it an attempt on my part to give the fullest scope to my imagination by taking it beyond the confines of the world of the living, suffering humanity'.²²

In his introduction to *The Shadow-Line*, Jeremy Hawthorn suggests, based on the novella's numerous references to explicitly supernatural works like *Hamlet* and *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, 'Conrad's disavowal should be treated with a certain caution'.²³ While, Hawthorn says, the novella 'certainly warns against placing one's confidence in divine or supernatural help at the expense of personal responsibility and hard work', it cannot be denied that the oppressive presence of the deceased former captain haunts the narrative (Hawthorn, xix). A 'straightforwardly evil' character, this former captain who died during the vessel's previous voyage haunts chief mate Burns in particular (Hawthorn, xviii). The current captain, the novella's narrator, is a young man, and resists getting carried away by Burns' superstitions. However, in his illness, Burns' insistence on the old captain's supernatural presence almost compels the new captain to believe in it, too.

The young, unnamed captain holds off the belief that ghosts exist, stating that 'I imagine the dead feel no animosity against the living. They are nothing for them' (Conrad, *Shadow-Line*, 67). However, upon discovering there is no medicine on board the ship that has only one healthy crew member on board, the possibility of supernatural interference or foul play enters the young

²² Joseph Conrad, *The Shadow-Line* 1916 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 110. Subsequent references are to this edition and are given in parentheses as (Conrad, *Shadow-Line*, page).

²³ Jeremy Hawthorn, 'Introduction' to *The Shadow-Line* 2003 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), xi–xxxiii; p. xviii.

captain's mind. Suddenly, '[t]he intense loneliness of the sea acted like poison on my brain' and signals that reason is gradually being unmoored from the narrative (Conrad, *Shadow-Line*, 75). The existence of ghosts gradually seems to become a real possibility, culminating in the appearance of a 'Thing', something

Big and alive. Not a dog – more like a sheep, rather. But there were no animals in the ship. How could an animal... It was an added and fantastic horror which I could not resist. The hair of my head stirred even as I picked myself up, awfully scared; not as a man is scared while his judgment, his reason still try to resist, but completely, boundlessly, and, as it were, innocently scared – like a little child (Conrad, *Shadow-Line*, 95).

The Thing, as it turns out, is Burns, crawling over the deck on hands and knees. The initial indefinability of the Thing is horrifying because its lack of specific detail 'resist[s] easy classification' (Joshi, 'Things', 75). Burns, a human, is not supposed to crawl as crawling is something animals do, and his crawling horrifies and makes categorisation difficult (hence, he becomes "the thing"). He violates cultural categorisation, which makes his appearance horrifying (Carroll, 31–2). Although there is a natural explanation for this seemingly unnatural apparition, the events are described in spectral terms. We will have to take Conrad's word for it and assume the seemingly supernatural events are not supernatural at all. The rationality of his yarns – 'the motivated, the occasional, the methodical and the rational' – is haunted by randomness and unpredictability.²⁴ Unpredictability gives Conrad's literature its haunting quality. The juxtaposition between the rational and the random in his stories create a sense of the uncanny, unfamiliarity that is emphasised by his displaced and repetitive language. The fantastic has resolved into the uncanny: while the events are terribly strange and unsettling, they become familiar as there turns out to be a natural explanation for them. The haunting comes from the description, the narrator's mindset perhaps, confused by lack of sleep and the intensity of his experience, and Burns' illness accounting for his delusions. Conrad's ghosts are emphatically not real; the haunting is psychological, not physical.

²⁴ Edward W. Said, 'Conrad: The Presentation of Narrative', *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction*. 7 (1974). 116–32; pp. 119–20.

This is not the case in *The Ghost Pirates*: we are left to wonder between the natural and supernatural explanations. Attempts are made to understand the strange events on board ship, and from these discussions we are clearly directed toward a supernatural explanation. Jessop and Tammy ask themselves whether the apparitions are flesh and blood, or ghosts or spirits. Tammy very sensibly answers that they cannot be flesh and blood since they appear to come from the sea: 'Where would they live? Besides, that first one I saw, I thought I could see through it [...] And they would drown' (Hodgson, *Ghost Pirates*, 55). This does not have to be the case, says Jessop, although he does not explain why he thinks so, and does not commit to either option. Their attempts to understand their predicament lead them to theorise on the ship herself: 'the thing I saw, came up out of the sea, and went back into the sea', and therefore, the 'ship is open to be boarded by those things' (Hodgson, *Ghost Pirates*, 55). Jessop

believe[s] that this ship is open [...] – exposed, unprotected, or whatever you like to call it. I should say it's reasonable to think that all the things of the material world are barred, as it were, from the immaterial; but that in some cases the barrier may be broken down. That's what may have happened to this ship. And if it has, she may be naked to the attacks of beings belonging to some other state of existence (Hodgson, *Ghost Pirates*, 56).

When asked what caused the *Mortzestus* to be open to invasion from other dimensions, Jessop's reaction contains clear religious *and* secular elements. He says: 'The Lord knows! [...] Perhaps something to do with magnetic stresses; but you'd not understand, and I don't, really' (Hodgson, *Ghost Pirates*, 56). The lack of explanation about how this ship became this way is strange. Some attempts are made: 'there may have been some rotten thing done aboard of her' – implying the invasions are part of a kind of cosmic punishment (Hodgson, *Ghost Pirates*, 56). This is not further explored, however; it is immediately followed by: 'Or, again, it's a heap more likely to be something quite outside anything I know' (Hodgson, *Ghost Pirates*, 56). We cannot know the reasons for the plight of the *Mortzestus* and her crew, not because we are only mere mortals that cannot understand God's mysterious ways, but because the mystery is part of the cosmic horror that Hodgson is aiming at. God's punishments and religious explanations have made way for the horror of unknown forces representing the chaos of the cosmos. Unnatural events still occur, and are all

the more horrifying because there is no real explanation for them – not even the wrath of an angered God.

The word ‘pirates’ is used only once in the actual text of *The Ghost Pirates* (the word ‘weird’ and its derivatives seven times; they are less pirate and more weird, accursed, outside the laws of nature rather than those of man). In one of the dialogues between Jessop and Tammy, Tammy suggests there might be more ghosts than the ones they have seen so far. Jessop replies: ‘If there are, [...] [y]ou can pray to God that they won’t stumble across us. It strikes me that whether they’re ghosts, or not ghosts, they’re blood-gutted pirates’ (Hodgson, *Ghost Pirates*, 113). The supernatural creatures of the novella exist outside the laws of nature, and are pirates in the sense that they are landless and lawless. Alder points out that the ghost pirates’ invasions of the ship are attempts to gain control of her, and when ‘mutual materiality became strong enough’, the pirates succeed in stealing the ship and sailing it into the sea (Alder, *Borderlands*, 142). This act of theft makes them pirates; not, as Lovecraft suggests, ‘the spirits of bygone buccaneers’ (Lovecraft, 83).

There is no sympathy for this ship, no pity for her plight. The *Mortzestus*’ name is rarely mentioned and she is not personified as a character at all. Hodgson does not seem nostalgic or sympathetic toward the ship and her history. With a name like *Mortzestus*, it is difficult to use the pronouns ‘she’ and ‘her’ – there is a strong, masculine feel to the ship’s name that make it difficult to idealise her. In *The Death Ship*, the entire ship is explored, an expedition that describes the ship in almost sensuous terms (this was one of Russell’s *fortes*). In *The Ghost Pirates*, there is no such exploration, despite the potential of the ghostly things appearing anywhere. They do not appear anywhere, however; apart from the occasional appearance on deck, most of the spectral action takes place high up in the ship’s rigging. This lack of interest in the various parts of the ship, the lack of interest in exploring them or even making them known to the reader shows Hodgson’s lack of nostalgia for his seafaring days and the ships in which he sailed.

Unlike Russell, who relished in his lengthy descriptions of the ship and her movements, Hodgson’s focus is on the dangerous places of the ship. No cosy cabins or lengthy dinners for his characters; Jessop and the other sailors spend little time in their bunks and are most of the time on

watch. The roles of the respective protagonists in the two works are, intriguingly, very different; whereas in *The Death Ship*, Geoffrey and Imogene are passengers (despite Geoffrey's seafaring credentials) and spectators, Jessop and his colleagues are sailors at work, who nonetheless observe and theorise, but also *need* to spend time in these dangerous places in order to keep the *Mortzestus* afloat. Mostly, passengers merely observed the action, writing about it in their diaries but leaving the danger to the sailors (Rediker, *Deep Blue Sea*, 2). Their respective relationships to danger, then, are different.

The haunting in *The Ghost Pirates* is physical, yet it takes place in a liminal, anti-chronotopic space. The ship *Mortzestus* potentially links different dimensions, yet remains a place of seafaring labour. The ship herself is not a ghost, but the haunting that goes on in and around her takes place outside the laws of nature. The nature of haunting in *The Ghost Pirates* evidences a kind of duality that is unsolvable because the inherent vagueness of Hodgson's supernatural terms. He blurs categories, which is horrifying, and this blur is never clarified despite attempts at understanding it through dialogue. It is, in other words, a weird type of haunting that is distinctly modern, which yet echoes the heterogeneity of the nineteenth-century maritime supernatural genre. This chapter has tried to establish ways in which Hodgson's work resonates with the maritime supernatural. Hodgson's work is often seen as a precursor to weird fiction proper. Weird fiction, as does Hodgson's work, pushes the boundaries of existing modes of haunting. The supernatural in weird fiction is new and unclassifiable. Hodgson's work represents something not seen before: inexplicable haunting that distances itself from existing lore and instead shifts the focus to all-encompassing fears of the cosmos. Weird fiction, representative of a modern age that aims to distance itself from the past, creates new forms of haunting.²⁵ It is not nostalgic but is nevertheless related to a literary tradition that is heavily concerned with the past. It is modern, yet cannot completely distance itself from the past. This leads one to question the meaning of modernity.

²⁵ Leif Sorensen, 'A Weird Modernist Archive: Pulp Fiction, Pseudobiblia, H. P. Lovecraft', *Modernism/modernity*, 17 (2010), 501–22; p. 501.

6.3 'The weirdest thing that could happen to us'²⁶

There are as many definitions of modernity as there are modern eras – each epoch has its own new things that make it stand out from what has come before. Quantifying the modern in only the chronological sense is not enough; nor is it my intention to add yet another “modernity” to the list. Instead, I would like to expand on the notion of renewal that is embodied in all senses of modernity. It can be seen as a Western project of the renewal of spaces, institutions or arrangements and the equally important experience of these places.²⁷ Alternatively, it has been interpreted as the human experience of this process of renewal which, evidence suggests, is always inevitably both feared and celebrated, the project of modernity embodies change.²⁸ It embodies technological, scientific or industrial progress as well as our attempts to grapple with these material changes (Alder, ‘Dark Mythos’, 90; Kang, 235). It importantly embodies a disconnection from the past as well as dread of a future that appears to be inexorable.²⁹ Modernity combines a fascination for the present – all this progress, processes and projects that indicate advancement – and the longing for another, past time (Boym, 22).

This is where modernity enters the realm of nostalgia, and the homesickness of nostalgia quickly translates into the unhomely of the uncanny in the experience of the new and modern. Modernity invites new monsters into familiar territory. Hodgson accomplishes in literature what Rosemary Wakeman calls ‘nostalgic modernism’ in her article on twentieth-century city planning.³⁰ Nostalgic modernism allows for renewal but retains elements of the past. It can be compared to the complete demolition of a building but leaving the monumental façade intact, retaining familiar

²⁶ Hodgson, *The Ghost Pirates*, 1909, p. 61

²⁷ Miles Ogborn, *Spaces of Modernity: London's Geographies 1680-1780* (New York and London: The Guilford Press, 1998), p. 11.

²⁸ Torbjörn Wandel, ‘Too Late for Modernity’, *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 18 (2005), 255–68; p. 262.

²⁹ Peter Fritzsche, ‘Specters of History: On Nostalgia, Exile, and Modernity’, *The American Historical Review*, 106 (2001), 1587–618; p. 1592.

³⁰ Rosemary Wakeman, ‘Nostalgic Modernism and the Invention of Paris in the Twentieth Century’, *French Historical Studies*, 27 (2004), 115–44; p. 117; 143.

elements of the past while creating space for modern renewal. Hodgson does the same in his literature; he retains the monumental front of the maritime supernatural but behind that rebuilds nooks and crannies according to modern taste, unmoored from past conventions. This allows unfamiliar monsters to make their mark on this vaguely familiar territory.

Nostalgic modernism has lost the notion of modernity as crisis – while this crisis of modernity is present in Russell’s work, Hodgson solves the crisis by retaining enough references to the past but still allowing for a complete renewal. Russell’s work, as chapter five has discussed, employs a double gaze, both looking back with nostalgia and forward with anxiety. However, and as contemporary reviewers begin to lament, Russell does not modernise the maritime supernatural the way Hodgson does. If the comparison with the renovated monumental house may be continued, Russell leaves the house intact and merely changes the configuration of the rooms while wondering how much longer the house will remain standing. Russell, by continuing the maritime supernatural in its tested form, effectively questions the status and future of shipboard labour, but he does so from a familiar position.

Hodgson’s register of nostalgia is ambivalent; he uses maritime lore consciously but he is also negative and uncertain about particular practices. This ambivalence displays the beginnings of a self-awareness that is distinctly modern. He does not express explicit thoughts on the modernisation of ships and shipping itself but he does lament the violence into which a crew, in his view inevitably, descends. Hodgson also addresses another modern crisis; that of literary saturation. In the early-twentieth century, ‘weird fiction was not so much a genre as the consequence of a world view’.³¹ The problem authors of the weird encountered was that of stale elements of late-Victorian ghost stories – vampires, ghosts, haunted houses and reanimated corpses. The solution to this staleness – to the sense of ‘we have seen it all’ – ‘was to transfer the locus of fear from the mundane to what [Lovecraft] called the “Great Outside” – the illimitable voids of outer space’ (Joshi, *Modern Weird Tale*, 1–2).

³¹ S. T. Joshi, *The Modern Weird Tale* (Jefferson, NC and London: McFarland, 2001), p. 1. Subsequent references are to this edition and are given in parentheses as (Joshi, *Modern Weird Tale*, page).

The experience of modernity retains a sense of the past and possesses a sense of future. It is suffused with realisation that there is no now: the modern was or will be, not is. It has happened before one has time to think about it (Wandel, 265). Maritime narratives of the long-nineteenth century, rooted in the past or preoccupied with the future, express exactly this lack of now-ness. Like nostalgia, which embodies the sense of not having seen enough of something, the feeling that 'we have seen it all' denotes dissatisfaction with the present. Modernity weirs time and space; they do not come together as one in the ship. Instead, the ship allows for several sensibilities of time and space to coincide in the same space. The multiplicity of the weird and of modernity fall in line with the intrinsic duality at sea and of maritime space.

Conclusion

This thesis set out to recognise the significance of the maritime supernatural. Nineteenth-century maritime fiction overflows with adventure, and with celebrations of confident and excellent seafaring abilities. At times, this seems to enable the reader to bypass the expressions of anxiety and doubt. At different points in the long-nineteenth century, however, literary sea journeys into the supernatural allow anxieties to come to the fore. Supernatural phenomena disrupt the forecastle fraternity. These disruptions become significant expressions of crisis in British imperial and maritime self-confidence. These narratives, drawing from an existing body of maritime superstitions and yarns, form what I have defined as the maritime supernatural genre. Occupied with the reality of seafaring and the experience of being haunted at sea, these narratives use the potential for extraordinary events at sea to surface anxieties and concerns about empire, religion and modernity.

The maritime supernatural genre is partly composed of other generic structures, elements and themes. Most evidently, these narratives borrow from nineteenth-century ghost stories and maritime adventure fiction, from Gothic and science fiction. The maritime supernatural narrative moreover draws on authors' own professional seafaring experience. The role of yarn-spinning is key in understanding the maritime supernatural genre. Both as a literary element as well as a real-life maritime practice, yarn-spinning prepares the inexperienced reader for the supernatural story that is about to unfold, and sets up the experienced reader for a narrative they are familiar with but which is an as-yet unfamiliar rendering.

A legend that would have been familiar to nineteenth-century audiences, the Flying Dutchman became a tool to investigate the supernatural genre from the sea perspective. As such, it allowed sailor-authors to investigate cultural concerns regarding religion, imperialism, modernisation and nostalgia without leaving the comfortable realm of maritime literature. Short stories, unlike novels, lent themselves well to another kind of myth-making: Hodgson's narratives

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discard existing yarns to replace them with new weird stories. This allowed him to explore modern anxieties, free from and yet haunted by a legacy of existing yarns.

The maritime supernatural genre does not simply take the ghost and its haunted house and translate it to fit in the maritime space. This thesis has clarified the maritime supernatural as a genre where the narrative logic is determined by the supernatural disruption of the rules of maritime culture. It has suggested detailed interpretations of otherness expressed in the genre. Over the century, the genre responds to contemporary culture; while the conditions change, the spectrality remains constant. The maritime space itself is an active component of the haunting at sea, complicit in the supernatural events that shows agency ultimately controlled by a higher agency, often that of a curse, monsters or a deity. Another complex geography is the ship, as a space that is haunted or a space that haunts. The supernatural disrupts men at work, making the experience of being haunted at sea communal. The ghosts, moreover, are creatures that are similarly experienced at maritime life; whether a cursed crew or demonic sea creature, the ghost in maritime supernatural literature is unique to its environment, adding impact to their appearance.

The maritime supernatural is applied in responsive ways throughout the century. The genre I am creating here only takes meaning through its flexible exercise. Frederick Marryat's use of maritime supernatural elements in *The Phantom Ship* facilitates an interrogation of religious priorities and prevalence. The maritime supernatural seems mostly a sensational page filler, and is itself not a locus for the religious discussion – although it does incorporate interrogation of duty. The foreign spatialities of the novel, however, suggest that this discussion cannot take place in England itself; the protagonists are Dutch, and their voyages move the locus of the novel's moral message to Portuguese-ruled Goa. This thesis argues that moving the novel's morality away from England, perhaps curious for a captain in the Royal Navy, was necessary for Marryat to be able to express this message of religious tolerance. Marryat employs the maritime supernatural to question assumptions of otherness, suggesting the other is not very distinct from the self.

In the middle of the nineteenth century, the maritime supernatural was temporarily abandoned, replaced with novels focusing on the urban Victorian space and industrialisation.

Whereas the early-nineteenth-century invocations of the maritime supernatural, exemplified by Marryat's *The Phantom Ship*, accept the Dutchman's existence incontestably and place the Dutchman in the background, in the late-nineteenth-century the genre interrogates the mechanics of the supernatural. This thesis tentatively suggests that this change responds to a change in global infrastructure. As the Suez Canal is constructed, there is no longer the necessity to travel via the Cape of Good Hope, where the Dutchman traditionally haunts. This change in the nature of voyaging produces a change in the nature of the supernatural. Practically, the opening of the Suez Canal advanced the use of steamships, and so also partakes in generating a late-nineteenth-century maritime fiction characterized by nostalgia for the age of sail.

Writing in the 1880s, William Clark Russell, focusing on the issue of national identity in a world that had become increasingly smaller and more closely connected, found the maritime ghost again. Whereas his unconventional tale *The Frozen Pirate* uses elements of the maritime supernatural in order to construct an original yarn, his more conventional *The Death Ship* anxiously voices changes to seafaring and the fate of the sailor. This thesis argues that the untraditional maritime supernatural of *The Frozen Pirate* allows for the narrative's complicated morality, whereas *The Death Ship* moralises the seafarer's destiny to a nostalgic tale warning for the loss of maritime craft. The Other is allowed to come dangerously close and ultimately, there seems no real solution to this problem apart from assuming characteristics of the other. Russell also expresses anxiety for the future of shipboard labour; the nostalgia for the age of sail implies a fear for the redundancy of craft and collectivity. The fore-castle fraternity in Russell's *The Death Ship* is haunted by the possibility of disintegration. Russell's particular nostalgic gaze has been shown to be a double gaze preoccupied with the unproblematic past as well as a bleak future. Far from a benevolent emotion, this particular nostalgia for the age of sail allows a glimpse of a horrifying future. This insight contributes to thinking about nineteenth-century nostalgia for the age of sail.

William Hope Hodgson, mythologising the sea anew in the early twentieth century, reinstalls a sense of horror in the maritime space itself. Hodgson's maritime supernatural is two-fold. He dispels the usefulness of traditional yarns, suggesting they fracture the fore-castle fraternity from

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within. When the unity on board ship *is* threatened from the outside, the threat represents a particularly modern cosmic horror. Modernity is actively put to use to answer questions about the nature of the haunted sea that Marryat and Russell left unanswered. Hodgson mentions maritime yarns to discard them as remnants of an outdated past, and shift his focus onto modern sea monsters and alternative universes. The violent potential of Hodgson's crews is realised in reaction to extraordinary maritime skills; his crewmembers haunt and disturb each other. Their violence is spectralised by the continuous threat they present to each other. This thesis suggests that Hodgson de-romanticises the seaboard life and emphasises the human horrors as well as the terrifying potential of the sea itself, adding a new dimension to maritime haunting. This new way of yarn-spinning marks the beginning of the opening of the literary sea.

This thesis ends at World War I. Moving into the twentieth century, authority to write the sea became less important. The novels of C.S. Forester and Patrick O'Brian appeared on the literary scene, Forester with his *Hornblower* series, O'Brian with his *Aubrey Maturin* series. These men were no seafarers, but through studying of the maritime world, customs and language they created 'a convincing world which went far beyond getting the details of shipboard life and naval tactics right'.¹ Margaret Cohen cites a quotation from *Library Journal*, published on the cover of a twentieth-century Marryat edition which evidences how sea writing of the twentieth century stands in direct relation with its nineteenth-century predecessors: 'When your O'Brian's are out, recommend Marryat' (Cohen, *Novel*, 134). Nineteenth-century sailor-authors addressed in this thesis, although now obscure, haunt the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Where the majority of nineteenth-century maritime authors were professional seafarers writing from direct experience, twentieth-century authors are mostly arm-chair sailors. O'Brian, Forester and other post-World War I authors of maritime fiction perfected their craft through careful study, resulting in stylistically strong narratives. The yarns spun by these arm-chair sailors

¹ Tim Wales, Bill Peschel, 'O'Brian, (Richard) Patrick (1914–2000)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2011 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/73687>, accessed 19 April 2016]

are not preoccupied with the reality of seafaring, but instead with the correct *representation* of seafaring. In a sense, they follow a tradition started in the nineteenth century by the sailor-authors this thesis has studied, but lack of direct experience prevents true literary representation of the maritime world that was valued in and by Marryat, Russell and Hodgson.

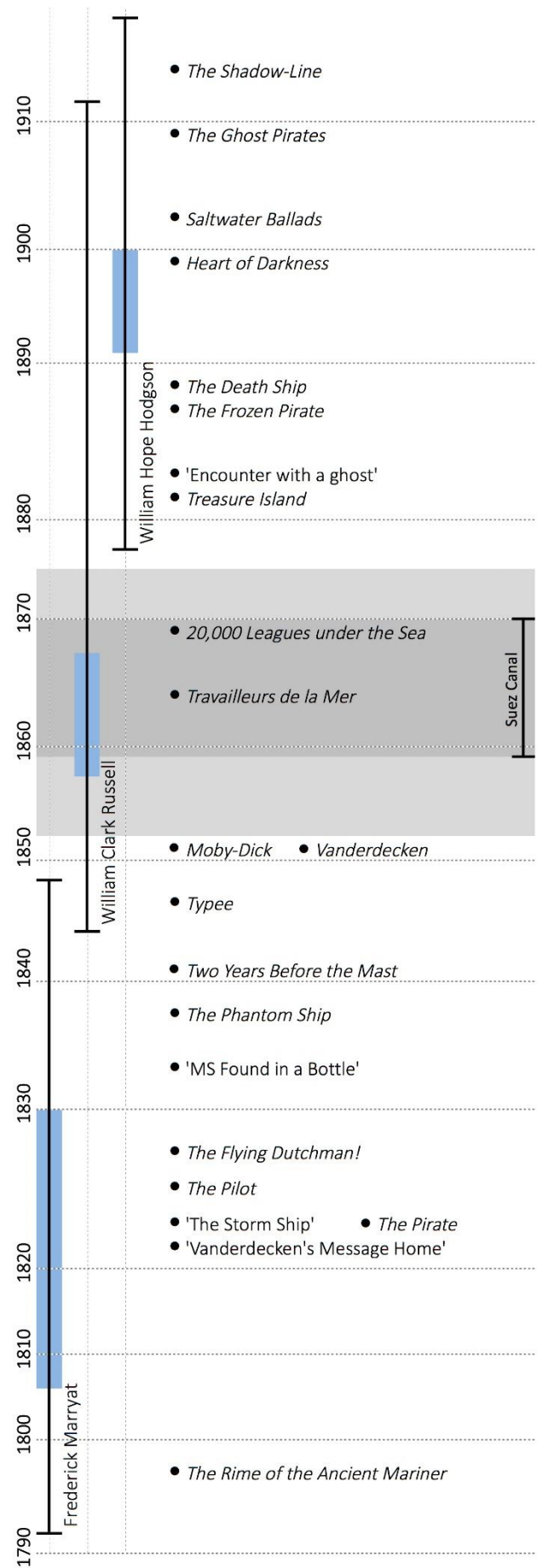
Twentieth-century narratives have a self-awareness that builds on a nineteenth-century tradition of sea writing. Nineteenth-century authors created a literary scene from their own experience which is utilised (with various degrees of knowingness) by twentieth and twenty-first authors. The nineteenth-century framework enables authors nowadays to write a differently haunted sea. A project could originate from this thesis exploring the precise ties that connect Marryat, Russell and Hodgson with twenty and twenty-first maritime supernatural narratives, and consider how their haunting is translated into new yarns of metaphorical ghosts. There are also other types of man-made maritime horror that have not had a chance to surface in this thesis. Man's use of the ocean has created haunting pollution in a very real and more enduring sense than the Flying Dutchman has done. This acute maritime horror is a central part of the consciousness and experience of the sea today. Perspectives from the literary shore and ship are marked by an awareness of this ecological, man-made horror. Another potential future project might consider contemporary as well as nineteenth-century maritime narratives from an ecocritical perspective in order to reflect on contemporary ecological issues and search for origins in industrial development of the nineteenth century.

This thesis contributes to an understanding of the literary ocean by considering nineteenth-century maritime supernatural narratives that respond to contemporary events. It closes the gap between two popular literatures of the period, the Victorian ghost story and the maritime adventure narrative. These fictions respond to contemporary concerns but they simultaneously complicate their interpretation by invoking the ocean's confusing temporalities. This thesis moreover suggests that the maritime supernatural manipulates the nature and limits of spectrality, and its insights suggests the sea should be considered more seriously and prominently in supernatural studies. By investigating the nature of nostalgia for the age of sail and complicating

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this notion, it shows the nineteenth-century response to maritime modernisation does not mean it simply laments a past. It suggests ways in which the nineteenth-century maritime world saw itself and its future, as well as how it saw its past, and deepens our understanding of how this nostalgia responds to reality through the supernatural. As a way of mythologising and remythologising the sea, the maritime supernatural contributes to a recognition of the literary importance of the sea.

Appendix A Timeline



This graph overlays publication dates of significant maritime supernatural and adventure fiction discussed in this thesis with the lives and seafaring careers of Marryat, Russell and Hodgson. It visualises the ebb and flow of the publication of maritime literature and illustrates the mid-nineteenth-century gap.

Appendix B The Phantom Ship publication details

Publication details of *The Phantom Ship* by Frederick Marryat as first appeared in *The New Monthly Magazine* between 1837 and 1839.¹ The reading experience would have been very different when the novel was first released as separate instalments due to the long breaks in publication, which might also explain the change in narrative style (Marryat did write and publish other narratives during this time; e.g. between July 1837 and March 1838 he published *Confessions of Ralph Restless* in *The New Monthly Magazine*).²

Year	Month	Volume	Chapters	Chapter notes
1837	March	49	1–2	
	April	49	3–5	Philip discovers his duty through reading his father's letter in chapter 4.
	May	50	6–8	Philip embarks on the <i>Ter Schilling</i> in chapter 8.
	June	50	9	First appearance of the Flying Dutchman. The <i>Ter Schilling</i> is shipwrecked.
	July	50	10–11	Poots accidentally kills himself with poison intended for Philip in chapter 11.
	August	50	12	Philip embarks on the <i>Batavia</i> , which does not encounter the Dutchman.
	September	51	13–14	
	October	51	15	Philip embarks on the <i>Vrouw Katerina</i> .
	November	51	–	

¹ 'The New Monthly Magazine, 1821–1854' (2005 Taylor and Francis Group) in The Wellesley Index to Victorian Periodicals, 1824–1900 [accessed 17 June 2016]

<<http://wellesley.chadwyck.co.uk/toc/toc.do?offset=2438390&divLevel=2&action=expand&queryId=#scroll>>

² 'Marryat, Frederick, 1792–1848, navy captain, novelist.' (Contributor Full Record) in The Wellesley Index to Victorian Periodicals, 1824–1900 [accessed 17 June 2016]

<http://wellesley.chadwyck.co.uk/fullrec/fullrec.do?&resultNum=331&area=contributors&forward=search&queryId=../session/1466158053_25627&fromBrowse=y>

	December	51	–	
1838	January	52	16	Second appearance of the Flying Dutchman. The <i>Vrouw Katerina</i> catches fire and sinks.
	February	52	17–18	Philip is made captain of the <i>Dort</i> . The Dutchman appears in the narrow Straits of Magellan, leading the <i>Dort</i> and the <i>Lion</i> onto the rocks.
	March - December	52–54	–	
1839	January	55	–	
	February	55	19–21	
	March	55	21–26	Philip and Amine embark on the <i>Utrecht</i> . The Dutchman appears and sails through the <i>Utrecht</i> , which sinks. Amine and Philip are eventually separated. For the next chapters, Philip and Krantz follow the trail that will lead them to Amine.
	April	55	27–31	
	May	56	32–35	Amine arrested by the Portuguese Inquisition in Goa (end of chapter 35).
	June	56	36–38	
	July	56	39	
	August	56	40–42	Amine is executed, but sees Philip in the crowd just before (chapter 40). Many years pass and Philip, an old man, embarks on his final voyage on an unnamed ship (chapter 41). Philip forgives Schriften and meets his father, who is still a young man. Vanderdecken's curse is absolved and his ship disintegrates, taking Philip and William Vanderdecken with her (chapter 42).

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