THE CASTAWAY NARRATIVE IN WORLD LITERATURE
HON 363
Fall 2015

While stories of drift and survival at sea are certainly as old as humanity’s first attempts to float, the literary and cultural form of castaway narrative has its own history that is tied directly to the world-historical conditions of trans-oceanic travel and the accompanying geo-political relations between colony and colonizer. It is therefore possible to also see the castaway narrative, not as simply the result of any national cultural development, but instead a literary form that emerges simultaneously in various sites of cultural production. From a historical perspective, we might argue that the castaway narrative emerges throughout the globe at the very moment that circumnavigation is made possible and thus can be read an important transnational literary form in which competing ideas and visions of the newly imagined world are proposed and contested. As such, these stories of survival at sea, tend to also be fascinating ideological texts that allow us to see the interplay between concrete world historical conditions and more abstract categories of language, geography, ethnography, race, gender, and national identity.

Week I: Introduction
What is a castaway? How can we historicize the castaway? What is the difference between experience and narrative?
Read: Selection of folkloric castaway narratives (*Momotaro, Urashimataro, Book of Jonah, Columbia River Basin stories, The Odyssey*, etc.)

Week II: Trans-Atlantic travels of the 15th and 16th C.
As the geography of the New World becomes known, how are earlier theological and proto-scientific understandings of the European Self changed? What is Orientalism and how is it a pervasive structural paradigm for understand both Self and Other?
Read: Selections from Edward Said and Mary Louise Pratt as well as Hans Staden narrative (Neil Whitehead, trans.) or Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca (Enrique Pupo-Walker, ed.)

Week III: Fictions, Realities, and the Castaway as Supplement
What is a Supplement? How do 15th and 16th C. castaway narratives use the contingencies of drift and maritime disaster to propose trans-oceanic comparisons and hierarchies of civility?
Read: Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*

Week IV: Discuss Defoe, Alexander Selkirk, and the story of Robinson Crusoe.

Week V: The Pacific Context and a Ming-centered East Asian World View
How do Atlantic and Pacific contexts of exploration and *ethnos* differ?
How do world maps from the 15th, 16th and 17th C. compare?
Read: *Choe Pu’s Diary: A Record of Drifting Across the Sea* (John Meskill, ed./trans.)

Week VI: Radical Difference and Disruption of East Asian Diplomatic Protocol

Week VII: Empires from Afar: Transnational Pacific Trade of the 17th C. 
What technologies contributed to substantial changes in trans-oceanic trade in the 17th c.? 
What was happening in South Asia and East Asia during this time? How did the collapse of the Ming Dynasty in 1644 affect change in other parts of the world? 
Read: Gary Ledyard, The Dutch Come to Korea (Royal Asiatic Society) & Tenjiku Tokubei monogatari (Michael Wood, trans.)

Week VIII: What is the politics of repatriation? What is the psychology of the repatriated? How is the castaway recast through narrative? 
View: Oroshiya suimutan—A beautiful cinematic interpretation of Daikokuya Kodayu’s experiences in the North Pacific, Russia, and post-repatriation.

Week IX: Iberian, Dutch, Russian, British, and American interests in Asia
How do Pacific castaway narratives reflect the rise and fall of various European-centered powers? How do colonized or potentially colonized peoples in the Pacific come to understand foreigners drifting upon their shores? 
Read: Either Richard Zumwinckle’s translation of Kaigai Ibun or Wood/Kohl’s translation of Funaosa Nikki

Week X: Whale blubber, coal, and the 19th c. industrialization of the oceans
Why was whaling necessary? How did coal (and ancillary technologies of steam ships and railroads) affect relations between Nation-States? 
Read: Jon Manjiro hyoryuki

Week XI: Romancing the Sea: The Story of Ranald MacDonald and other “fake” castaways
How does the subject of the castaway come to be figured as a story of redemption in the 19th c. How does the burgeoning commercial publishing industry embrace the castaway narrative? 
Read: Frederik Schodt, Native American in the Land of the Shogun

Week XII: Moby Dick and the Essex
Read: Herman Melville selections
Submit: Abstract, thesis, and sources for final paper

Week XIII: Imagining castaways in the 20th/21st C. How have GPS and other satellite technology allowed us to reimagine drift? How does the castaway narrative survive today? 
Read: Yann Martel, Life of Pi; JM Coetzee, Foe; or Adams, Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy

Week XIV: View Tom Hanks Castaway
Week XV: Final Discussion of contemporary re-articulations of drift and transnational commodification of cultural production