

## Colonial Insurgency and the Spectral Rhetoric of Arousal

Nicole M. Rizzuto

What is at stake is the historic result of our thinking; what is under tragic scrutiny is our traditional way of seeing. . . . The time is ripe—but may go rotten—when masters must learn to read the meaning contained in the signatures of their former slaves.

George Lamming, *The Pleasures of Exile*<sup>1</sup>

This spectral *someone other looks at us*, we feel ourselves being looked at by it, outside of any synchrony, even before and beyond any look on our part, according to an absolute anteriority . . . and asymmetry, according to an absolutely unmasterable proportion.

Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx*<sup>2</sup>

### I.

What are the conditions of possibility of arousal, an awakening from slumber, an excitation of intellectual interest, in the context of colonial insurgency? I investigate this question by reading a work that centers on the limits and conditions of arousal through an allegory of reading and seeing. This is Herman Melville's 1855 novella, "Benito Cereno." Through a spectral rhetoric, this text formally challenges the opposition it thematically establishes between arousal and slumber. It indicates that arousal is difficult, if not impossible, to verify, calculate, or calibrate, because it evades the order of the visible/invisible. In so doing, Melville's writing opens itself to autocritique and questions the demarcation between colonial and postcolonial textualities.

Based on an historical document, "Benito Cereno" plots the persistent failure of its central witness, U.S. Sea Captain Amasa Delano, to see, to read, and therefore become aroused by, the mutinous signature of African slaves onboard a Spanish ship. Melville rewrites chapter eighteen of Amasa Delano's *Narrative of Voyages and Travels, in the Northern and Southern Hemispheres* from 1817, which details the Massachusetts sea captain's experiences when he boards a Spanish ship in distress after, unbeknownst to him, a slave revolt has occurred. Melville makes significant changes to Delano's text, not least of which is a structural modification: He withholds until the end of the novella direct representation of the key information that Delano's attestation presents immediately, namely, that a mutiny has occurred on Cereno's ship. The revolt is instead depicted in an appendage to Delano's story, a discursive interruption of the novella in the form of a legal deposition. By staging the rebellion in this way, renaming the ship the *San Dominick*, setting the events in 1799, and modeling the mutiny's leader, Babo, after Toussaint L'Ouverture, Melville extends the historical referent of the novella, and articulates the mutiny as an iteration of the Haitian Revolution. The text thus comments on a wider colonial episteme by portraying the failure of Europeans and Americans to become intellectually aroused by the possibility of a political arousal among uneducated black slaves. As Michel-Rolph Trouillot explains, the Haitian revolution "entered history with the peculiar

characteristic of it being unthinkable even as it happened. The contention that enslaved Africans and their descendants could not envision freedom—let alone formulate strategies for gaining and securing such freedom—was based not so much on empirical evidence as on ontology, an implicit organization of the world and its inhabitants.”<sup>3</sup>

The significance of the structural revision inheres not only in its recoding of the historical event into a narrative of failed arousal, however; it inheres in the capacity to arouse its audience simultaneously. Demonstrating Delano’s inability to read rhetorically and therefore to recognize the spectacle of race onboard the ship as performance of tropic substitutions, a masquerade of submission that displaces the fact of revolt, the novella at the same time scatters figures throughout who enable acts of counterfocalization through rhetorical reading. That such figures are not given voice has generated a divided critical response to “Benito Cereno.” It has been interpreted as either perpetuating colonial oppression, or reflecting the postcolonial insight that the subaltern cannot speak. The latter is the more common interpretation today, and articulated by critics such as Glen Altschuler and Laurie Robertson-Lorant, along with Gesa Mackenthum, who argues that because “Benito Cereno” is organized through Delano’s and Cereno’s perspectives, “the text shares the insight of postcolonial critics that ‘the subaltern cannot speak’—and the position that the colonized cannot be represented in any culturally authentic way, as the power of representation rests exclusively with the colonizer.”<sup>4</sup>

To take either side, colonial or postcolonial, by citing an unerring silence on the part of the Africans in the text is to privilege voice over vision, however, and to discount the role that rhetoric plays in confounding the opposing terms through which the novella is most often addressed. I argue that this work is neither colonial nor postcolonial in essence, but that a spectral rhetoric introduces into it a constitutive drift which makes it oscillate between colonial slumber and colonial critique through arousal. The figurative articulation of perception suggest that the authority of any centralized, universalized perception—here, a colonial perception—relies on a process of foreclosure. The force of figures who see rather than speak in this work is that they potentiate an exit strategy from the colonial axiomatics of witnessing that underwrite Spanish imperialism as well as antebellum U.S. juridico-legal discourses of racialization, both of which subtend “Benito Cereno.” Focusing on three brief scenes in the novella, I propose, therefore, to read these figures as nodes of arousal to readers, demonstrating how they circumscribe universalized vision and ultimately undermine the distinctions between open and hidden, visible and invisible, on which the mutiny as secret—and the “truth” of the text as either colonial or postcolonial—rests.

My reading of Melville’s texts responds to paradigmatic gestures of two contemporary discourses, postcolonial studies on the one hand, and trauma studies on the other. As a discourse invested in revealing both critiques of and complicities between literature and imperial projects of modernity, historical context is a crucial component in postcolonial studies’ analyses of literary fiction. A concern with literature’s engagements with histories of anti-colonial resistance and colonial oppression, however, can tend toward an overvaluation of the evidentiary, the historically verifiable, at the expense of an attention to the stylistic, formal, and rhetorical dimensions of a literary work. This is a problem, the depictions of arousal in “Benito Cereno” suggest, because these aesthetic dimensions can call into question the ontology of history itself, and expose the limits of historicist analysis of colonial and anti-colonial politics. Trauma studies, in contrast, has focused on the ways in which the rhetorical and formal staging of witnessing limits any direct access to history, troubling an unproblematized notion of historicity operative in literary analyses. Throughout the nineteen-eighties and -nineties, trauma studies centered on the historical traumas of Europe, specifically the Shoah, in continental literature and philosophy. Neglected, still today, is a thorough investigation of

spectral, traumatic events that trouble witnessing outside of Europe, colonialism and decolonization in the Americas, Africa, Southeast Asia, and other locations throughout the world. My examination of witnessing and arousal in “Benito Cereno” therefore attempts to initiate a conversation between postcolonial studies and trauma studies that addresses the oversights of both discourses.<sup>5</sup>

## II.

“Benito Cereno” presents arousal as and at its moment of climax; the language switches abruptly from rational to eschatological and renders an apocalyptic revelation. Delano learns the hidden meaning of the narrative’s mysterious events in one instant: “That moment, across the long-benighted mind of Captain Delano, a flash of revelation swept, illuminating in unanticipated clearness, his host’s whole mysterious demeanor, with every enigmatic event of the day, as well as the entire past voyage of the *San Dominick*.”<sup>6</sup> This arousal is miraculous, because Delano cannot yet know the events of the entire past voyage of the *San Dominick*. Textually, the mutiny is a trauma, and therefore spectral, in the sense that Derrida marks, “a supernatural and paradoxical phenomenality, the furtive and ungraspable visibility of the invisible, or an invisibility of a visible X.”<sup>7</sup> It precedes diegetic time, and even when it is metaleptically presented in Spanish Captain Benito Cereno’s deposition, it evades direct narrative representation and epistemological certainty, interrupting the authority of the juridico-legal document that portrays it. Despite all this, in the scene cited above Delano obtains a vision of this heterogeneous event that allows him to overcome the limitations of being within time, by witnessing the entirety of narrative events not in their unfolding but all at once. “All this,” Melville writes, “with what preceded, and what followed, occurred with such involutions of rapidity, that past, present, and future seemed one”(BC, 85).

Although the novella makes Delano its central focalizer and thus sutures readers’ perceptions to his, this scene’s telescoping of past, present, and future into an instant structurally separates readers from the dominant perspective the novella universalizes. While Delano has “scales dropped from his eyes” (BC, 85) and the rebelling slaves finally appear with “masks torn away” (BC, 85) all at once, the revelation is not instantaneously performed. Readers do not experience the three temporal moments as one as Delano does, because they confront a time other than that of past, present, and future in the text. This is the time *of* the text, specifically, the time of reading, which can become a time of arousal.

Apparently a minor disturbance in the narrative organization of perception, this structural separation between focalizer and reader is in fact developed at strategic—but also apparently minor—moments throughout the work. Attending to the minor enables the possibility of arousal in the face of Delano’s waking slumber, his failure to read himself as object of colonial eyes at the edge of both his, and the novella’s, lines of sight, and his coterminous *projection* onto these figures what he sees. Retracing the figurative choreography of multiplying perspectives, the crossfire of sightlines, suggests that colonial insurgency disseminates throughout the text, operating as the specter that keeps the spectator Delano in its grasp of visible-invisible. This is Derrida, once again, on the doubled perspective of the specter, objective and subjective genitive:

The specter, as its name indicates, is the *frequency* of a certain visibility. But the visibility of the invisible. And visibility, by its essence, is not seen, which is why it remains *epekeina tes ousias*, beyond the phenomenon or beyond being. The specter is also, among other things, what one imagines, what one thinks one sees and what one projects—on an imaginary screen where there is nothing to see. . . . The perspective has to be reversed, once again: ghost or *revenant*, sensuous non-sensuous, visible-invisible, the

specter first of all sees us. From the other side of the eye, visor effect, it looks at us even before we see it or even before we see period. We feel ourselves observed, sometimes under surveillance by it even before any apparition.<sup>8</sup>

As spectral, colonial insurgency manifests as rhetoric rather than phenomenon. As rhetoric, it is “sensuous non-sensuous,” the persistent and irreducible turning from visible to invisible, which produces the very possibility of reading.<sup>9</sup>

The opening episode of “Benito Cereno” paradoxically orchestrates its main focalizer as partially blinded, functioning with limited visibility, though not limited scopic drive. Delano first appears on the scene looking through a prosthetic eye at the halted Spanish ship on the horizon; “the stranger, viewed through the glass, showed no colors” (BC, 35). Melville co-articulates Delano’s obstructed vision and scopophilia, writing, “with no small interest, Captain Delano continued to watch her—a proceeding not much facilitated by the vapors partly mantling the hull, through which the far matin light from her cabin streamed equivocally enough” (BC, 35). Another set of eyes immediately appears in the form of a litote within a simile. The cabin’s early morning light streams equivocally through the vapors “much like the sun—by this time hemisphered on the rim of the horizon and apparently in company with the strange ship, entering the harbor—which, wimpled by the same low, creeping clouds, showed not unlike a Lima intriguante’s one sinister eye peering across the Plaza from the Indian loophole of her dusk saya-y-manta” (BC, 35-36).

This heliotropism onto the woman’s eye invites a critical appraisal of not only what, but how, Delano sees and doesn’t see. As both a literal light source and the symbol for the source of enlightenment through knowledge and reason, the sun, and its displacement, the eye, provide the conditions for seeing or looking, and both have been partially eclipsed. The tropological movement from sun to eye also inaugurates another perceiver on the scene, one who is not a character like Delano, but pure figure. The introduction of the Creole woman initiates the oscillation between postcolonial and colonial modes of visibility, as Melville writes her into and out of the narrative simultaneously. She is removed from plot, story, characters, and her own story never passes into the text. Thus, she is “non-sensuous.” And yet, she still appears as metonym, a “sinister” eye, and so is also sensuous. In everyday speech, “sinister” has come to mean something like generalized evil, but, as Melville is ever attuned to the precision of words, it bears looking to etymology to seek out a more precise meaning of sinister. Its etymology reveals that “sinister” calls into question the search for precise meaning: Derived from both the Middle English *sinistre*, unfavorable, and from Old French, from Latin *sinister*, on the left, unlucky, sinister is defined in the *OED* as “given with intent to deceive or mislead, esp. so as to create a prejudice against some person; prompted by malice or ill-will.” That the first reference to a colonial subject in the novella is linked to deception, and appears in a self-reflexive passage, indicates the possible significance of this marginal figure to interpretation and invites further investigation into the historico-political situation of deception she indexes.

Melville may have had an article from *Harper’s* from 1851 in mind when he invoked the Lima woman and her costume of the saya-y-manto in the novella. In *Melville’s Reading*, Merton Sealts points out that Melville subscribed to *Harper’s*, and Allan Moore Emery deduces that Melville first read about the saya-y-manto there, and used this article as a source to compose a number of aspects of the novella.<sup>10</sup> Among the many ethnographic observations the writer offers in the article entitled “Lima and the Limanians” are not a few about women, and specifically Creole women, purportedly “the most charming and graceful women of South America.”<sup>11</sup> The discussion of the Limeñas centers on their beauty and intrigue, and especially the costume that creates the latter. The saya-y-

manto resembles the dress of the Moors, to whom it owes its origin, and it is worn only in Lima and only in the streets, as a “walking costume.” While these women are Creole, not Indian, and the writer remarks their “pale” and “marble” limbs more than once, he or she also makes much of the distinction between this dress “native” to Lima and the European clothing that these women also wear. The metaphor thus posits the woman when she wears the *saya y manto* as a “Moorish” figure; the costume differentiates the Creole woman from her European Christian ancestors and links her to the Arab Muslim, to the North African refugees whose costumes are not worn in Spain but only in Lima. Melville seems to pick up on the article’s metaphor that separates the Limeña from a Christian and European heritage, by using the word “Indian” when he describes the *saya-y-manto*’s loophole.

According to the article, originally, men demanded women wear the *saya-y-manto* with the aim of alleviating a husband’s jealousy, since the costume shields a wife’s body from other men. The writer’s description signals the confinement and binding of the woman by the dress.

The *saya*, as formerly worn, was a skirt or petticoat made of an elastic black silk, plaited at the top and bottom in small folds, fitting so closely as to display the outlines of the figure, and every motion of the limbs. It was so narrow at the bottom that the wearers were forced to take steps extremely short, which gave to their gait a mincing character more striking than modest (602).

The *saya* constricts the movement women engage in when they wear it, walking. Or, at least it did in the past. Although this fashion of plaiting in the bottom of the skirt was no longer worn in 1851, it was at least as late as the 1830s, and thus when “Benito Cereno” is set.<sup>12</sup> If the skirt limits the woman’s mobility through its tightness, one would assume that the *manto* limits her mobility by covering almost everything else. “The *manto* is a thick veil of black silk joining the *saya* at the back of the waist,” the writer tells us. “It is brought up over the shoulders and head, and drawn over the face in such a manner as to conceal the features entirely, with the exception of one eye, which is visible through a small, triangular space left open for the purpose.”<sup>13</sup> Thus, the novella’s image of the single eye peering out from the costume, as the sun from the clouds, is framed within the context of the limited movement or agency of the Creole woman, it would seem.

The costume that appears to enforce a woman’s constriction, however, paradoxically enables her to experience more freedom of movement and action than any other type of clothing she wears. The article intimates that women have exploited its capacity for ambiguity. The women, the writer claims, do not dislike this national dress, but are instead “enthusiastically attached” to it because it provides “effectual disguise” and allows them “to go everywhere unattended” (602).

Anyone can address them, and they violate no usage in accosting anyone. The uniformity of the costume, in materials, shape and color, and the perfect concealment of the features, makes identification impossible, so that the street becomes a perpetual masquerade. The costume which owes its origin to marital jealousy has become a most efficient aid to intrigue (602).<sup>14</sup>

Thus, the woman who wears the *saya-y-manto* in Lima becomes the figure for a certain kind of agent, one who makes the most of her restrictive garb and puts its constrictiveness to use, making it work for rather than against her. She uses the *saya-y-manto* to exit the domestic sphere and broaden her access to public space, which she could not do dressed in the European fashions of the day.

Melville might have invoked this figure because, like the Africans onboard the *San Dominick*, she engages in what the article's writer calls a "perpetual masquerade," but her inclusion in the text also serves a critical potential that might exceed, or even remain at odds with, the author's intentions. Because she uses her status strategically, exploiting the unforeseen possibilities of an imposed tradition, the Lima intriguing figure detour and digression from an original intent or purpose. She observes custom and wears the dress that a patriarchal cultural logic imposes, but she finds the "loophole" in this custom and costume, and turns it in another direction. In "Benito Cereno," a text that both mentions and uses legal discourse—Cereno's deposition—Melville's use of the word *loophole* in this scene pops. An opening that admits light or air, or permits observation, a loophole is also a means of escape, especially an ambiguity or omission in the text through which the intent of a statute, contract, or obligation might be evaded. The saya-y-manto's loophole functions in both of these ways in "Benito Cereno." It underlines the importance of vision to the novella, because it is an opening that allows in light, enabling its subject to observe from a distance at a distance, and it links vision to political and textual authority, because it provides a means of escaping social control through lacunae or omissions. Because the passage in which the Lima intriguing figure appears reflects on how one sees and reads and doubles the act by introducing a figure who evades intended meanings, it provides a first node of arousal, enabling counterinterpretation, through counterfocalization of the events rendered through the controlling perception of Delano.<sup>15</sup>

Using the loophole as a mode of reading can arouse interest in another scene of loopholes; significantly, this is also a scene of abyssal arousal-slumber that centers on the body of a woman. As he walks across the *San Dominick*, Delano stops before an apparent scene of slumber. The "partly disclosed" African woman through lace rigging that represents, according to Delano, a "pleasant sort of sunny sight," structurally echoes the partially disclosed Lima woman's face that represents the sun's partial appearance through the clouds.

His attention had been drawn to a slumbering negress, partly disclosed through the lace-work of some rigging, lying, with youthful limbs carelessly disposed, under the lee of the bulwarks, like a doe in the shade of a woodland rock. Sprawling at her lapped breasts was her wide-awake fawn, stark naked, its black little body half lifted from the deck, crosswise with its dam's; its hands, like two paws, clambering upon her; its mouth and nose ineffectually rooting to get at the mark; and meantime giving a vexatious half-grunt, blending with the composed snore of the negress (BC, 60).

Delano is perhaps sexually aroused by the sight of the partially visible woman who slumbers and remains unaroused by her child's attempt to "get at the mark," but he is not intellectually aroused by this scene. And yet, the rhetoric of the passage indicates that perhaps he should be. The text cuts both ways here. On the one hand, the ethnographic perception that codes the couple into the conventional portraiture of nineteenth-century travel writing renders woman and child instantly readable in their simple, surface animality, foreclosing interpretation of any interiority. On the other hand, by turning the female body into writing, the passage intimates that this scene of apparent slumber might arouse reading and interpretation in a way that circumscribe the limits of that ethnographic perception.

The homologies between this passage and the earlier one suggest what Delano does not notice but the puns indicate: that the slave woman here, like the Lima intriguing figure, performs a masquerade. Here, the masquerade is one of remaining unaroused. The text relates that the woman's snore is

“composed,” insinuating some possibility of artifice. In addition, she is presented not only as a text to decode, but one that presents a challenge to interpretation. The word “dam” refers to a female domestic animal, but it also means barrier, a limit that troubles attempts to get at the “mark,” rendering them “ineffectual.” Like the infant, Delano probes the woman’s body also, here with his eyes, but unlike the child, who seeks nourishment and to satisfy a need, Delano probes for pleasure which obtains in affirming his difference from the woman. This is indicated by the clichés of colonial adventure and exploration that define her: “There’s naked nature, now; pure tenderness and love, thought Captain Delano, well-pleased” (BC, 61).

The ensuing arousal of the African woman from slumber can be read as an instance of masquerade performed for the spectator who watches her without realizing he might also be watched. In other words, perhaps the African woman, like the Lima *intriguante*, makes the most of her subordinated status and diverts intended meanings.

The uncommon vigor of the child at length roused the mother. She started up, at distance facing Captain Delano. But *as if* not at all concerned at the attitude in which she had been caught, delightedly she caught the child up, with maternal transports, covering it with kisses” (BC, 61, *emph. mine*).

For Delano, the woman’s actions when she sees him observing appease and lull him back into comfort after moments of unease and near-arousal on the ship, because they are naturalized; “these natural sights somehow insensibly deepened his confidence and ease” (BC, 61). Like the woman who peers from a distance out of her Indian loophole, this woman also faces Delano “at distance,” and acts *as if* she is not concerned with Delano’s gawking, at which she has caught him as much as he has caught her. The “as if” introduces, again, the possibility of artifice, the possibility that, knowing she is being watched, the woman choreographs nature as performance, just as the words “composed snoring” suggests the possibility that she performed slumber when Delano stares and speculates. The “as if,” however, also reads in the other direction; it might just as easily mean that she *is not* concerned at the attitude in which she had been caught.

In this passage, as in the passage depicting the Lima *intriguante*, the limit between the visible and invisible remains suspended, because no final reading of events can be rigorously produced. Colonial insurgency is spectral, legible and illegible at once: The text never verifies whether political arousal on the part of the woman has taken place, and therefore does not determine whether this is a scene of slumber or arousal on the part of Delano. Rather, it simply makes possible an arousal on the part of its readers. It provides a minimal invitation to counterfocalize, to look through the perception of the African woman who appears to be merely an object of perception. At the same time, it does not stabilize her sightline into that of a narrative subject, but instead makes it exceed the text’s closure, operating as an asymmetry of perception. The deposition at the end of the novella relates that the African women do indeed participate in the mutiny, and thus lends support to the possibility that this scene is an instance of colonial masquerade. Nevertheless, it leaves the truth of the scene in abeyance, and offers only a double bind: One can read through the eyes of Delano or the woman, but not both. The incompatibility of these two perceptions is not resolved. By exposing the impossibility of revealing a single truth through its collision of perceptions, the novella performs its own version of masquerade, a masquerade that does not cover over what is real, but calls into question the limit between masquerade and reality, rhetorical performance and truth.

On the final page of the book, Melville makes a bold gesture: he gives the last look, and even perhaps the last word, to Babo, leader of the slaves, orchestrator of the mutiny. Taking the metonym of the eye of the other to its limit, Melville actually separates the eye from the living being and suggests that its refusal to capitulate to the gaze of the authority, the imperial power, survives even death. It survives not only the silencing of Babo by the narrative and by the law, through the tribunal and the deposition that follows the narrative. It survives also the “final” silencing of the African slave through execution by the state. “Some months after, dragged to the gibbet at the tail of a mule, the black met his voiceless end” (BC, 102), the narrator relates. Although Babo dies just as he lives in the narrative, without voice, this passage suggests that his eye, here homologically linked to the Limeña’s and the African woman’s eyes, is what remains. More exactly, the perspective of that other eye remains. Like the ashes, human remains, the gaze itself is a remainder in the text.

The body was burned to ashes; but for many days, the head, that hive of subtlety, fixed on a pole in the Plaza, met, unabashed, the gaze of the whites [recall our first observer who likewise peered out “across the Plaza”]; and across the Plaza looked towards St. Bartholomew’s church, in whose vaults slept then, as now, the recovered bones of Aranda; and across the Rimac bridge, looked toward the monastery, on Mount Agonia without; where, three months after being dismissed by the court, Benito Cereno, borne on the bier, did, indeed, follow his leader (BC, 102).

The text leaves us with an irreducible figure, which it simultaneously disfigures by turning it into a specter. Babo is described as both human and other than human at once in this passage. Turning his head into a “hive of subtlety,” the passage suggests its decay, as it is infiltrated by maggots, and thus articulates it as corpse. But the passage also confers an agency to Babo’s head when it remarks that it “met, unabashed, the gaze of the whites,” looking across the colonial territory in which Babo and the slaves aboard the *San Dominick* have stood trial, and in which he has been given the death sentence. The novella ends without ending; its rhetoric produces the impossibility of closure. While its staging of the law consolidates colonial justice through depositions and trials, and thus brings an end to arousal in its political and intellectual dimensions, the staging of perception interrupts this closure. Babo reemerges here after his death as revenant, specter, as the asymmetry of a visibility that can always seize one when one slumbers. “Benito Cereno,” trails off with a suggestion to remain vigilant, and aroused by the promise, or threat, of an insurgent return.

These scenes of spectral witnessing intimate the capacity of “Benito Cereno” to travel outside its historical contexts, tracing the seam between postcolonial and colonial textualities, while inviting readers to become witnesses to the traumatic event of colonial insurgency by arousing them to failed arousals. The work “Benito Cereno” is itself spectral, therefore; it “reaches us, who also inherit it, beyond its natural and legitimate heirs, through an unindicated channel and with the meaning of the inheritance remaining to be deciphered.”<sup>16</sup> By failing to end, to fall unequivocally on the side of colonial consolidation or postcolonial critique, this novella paradoxically also succeeds. It reveals the potential of rhetorical reading as a means of critically deploying the marginal histories crucial to the work of postcolonial studies, while intimating how colonialism and anti-colonialism in Anglophone literature produce their own vocabularies and strategies of traumatic witnessing as yet unheard by trauma studies.

*Nicole Rizzuto is an Assistant Professor of English at Oklahoma State University. She has published on the writings of French philosopher Sarah Kofman, has a publication forthcoming on the Caribbean modernism of George*

Lamming and Jean Rhys, and is currently revising her dissertation into a book manuscript that explores how Anglophone modernist and postcolonial novels are shaped by testimonial discourse.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> *The Pleasures of Exile* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004), 63.

<sup>2</sup> *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 7.

<sup>3</sup> Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), 73.

<sup>4</sup> Glenn C. Altschuler, "Whose Foot on Whose Throat?" in *CLA Journal* 3 (March, 1975), Laurie Robertson-Lorant, *Melville: A Biography* (New York: Clarkson Potter Publishers, 1996), and Gesa Mackenthum, "Postcolonial Masquerade: Antebellum Sea Fiction and the Transatlantic Slave Trade," in *Early America Re-explored: New Readings in Colonial, Early National, and Antebellum Culture*, eds. Klaus H. Schmidt and Fritz Fleischman (New York: Peter Lang, 2000), 542.

<sup>5</sup> My dissertation does this at greater length. "Literature and Testimony: Witnessing Traumatic History in the Works of Herman Melville, Rebecca West, and Sarah Kofman." Columbia University, 2006.

<sup>6</sup> "Benito Cereno," in *Melville's Short Novels: Authoritative Texts, Contexts, Criticism*, ed. by Dan McCall (New York, London: W. W. Norton & Co., 2002), 85. Hereafter cited parenthetically.

<sup>7</sup> Derrida, 7.

<sup>8</sup> Derrida, 101.

<sup>9</sup> On rhetoric as the possibility of reading see Paul de Man, "Semiotics and Rhetoric" in *Allegories of Reading: Figural Language in Rousseau, Nietzsche Rilke, and Proust* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), 3-19.

<sup>10</sup> Merton Sealts, *Melville's Reading: A Check-List of Books Owned and Borrowed* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1966), 64, and Emery, "The Topicality of Depravity in 'Benito Cereno,'" in *American Literature* 5.3 (August 1983). Emery argues, convincingly, that this article was Melville's source not only for the figure of the Lima intriguing and her saya-y-manto, but also for the Lima architecture to which Melville refers at the end of the novella, and for the theories of "human hybridity" espoused by Cereno in the text.

<sup>11</sup> "Lima and the Limanians," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* (October 1851), 602.

<sup>12</sup> In "Women of Lima," an excerpt from *Peregrinations of a Pariah*, which tells of a voyage to Peru in the 1830s, Flora Tristán describes the saya as "so close fitting that at the bottom it is only wide enough to permit one foot to be put before the other as one walks with tiny steps." Cited in *The Peru Reader: History, Culture, Politics*, ed. Orin Starn, Carlos Iván Degregori, and Robin Kirk (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), 197.

<sup>13</sup> "Lima and the Limanians," 602.

<sup>14</sup> I do not make any claims about the truth or reality of the writer's statements about the Lima women in this article. Whether or not women actually enjoyed wearing the saya y manto and saw it as an "efficient aid to intrigue," or cared that it was or might have been such, we cannot tell from this article, since it presents only the observations of the writer and offers no direct interviews by the Limeñas themselves. Obviously, the writer's language in this article performs the problematic gesture of representing particular gendered and raced subjects through structures of European fantasy, by exoticizing colonial women and their dress. I discuss this article here because it was most likely the place where Melville read about the women and the costume, and therefore its claims about the double-function of the saya y manto, how it both created constriction and afforded women agency, were what he probably associated with the figure of the "Lima intriguing" when he invoked her in the novella.

<sup>15</sup> The argument I, and the *Harper's* writer, make here about the Lima women in their sayas has antecedents. Mary Louise Pratt points out that Flora Tristán's representations of Lima women in their sayas in her *Peregrinations of a Pariah* constitute what Pratt calls a "feminitopia": "episodes that present idealized worlds of female autonomy, empowerment and pleasure" (*Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), 167). Tristán, whose mother was French and father Arequipan, and who became a worker's and women's rights activist when she returned to France, traveled to Peru in the 1830s. She sees the Limeñas' costume as the "center of their social and sexual freedom." Pratt asserts that Tristán's discussion of the women and their sayas directly echoes that of an earlier English feminist traveler's, Lady Mary Montague, who focuses on not Lima women's, but on Turkish women's use of the saya y manto and the female liberties it enabled these women as well. While both Tristán's and Montague's feminitopias are orientalizing, as Pratt acknowledges, they were also both staged to counter European racist, contemptuous interpretations of such women and their dress. Pratt writes that "what other writers record as the uncleanness and unkemptness of Lima women, Tristán presents as a strategic cultural practice," and Montague asserts that Turkish women "have more freedom than we [presumable English women] have" and condemns the "extreme stupidity" of previous writers on Turkish women (167).

It is also important to point out, however, that the writer of the *Harper's* article shows how the feminitopia envisioned by Tristán is indeed, in Pratt's words, an "idealized world" more than a reality for all women: it exists only for the upper classes, the Creoles, and moreover, only for those upper class Creoles who are young. The writer of "Lima and the Limanians" writes, "If man or woman were only an animal being—and if she could always be young and physically charming—this life of the Limeña might not seem so undesirable. If her reign is brilliant it is brief. When her beauty fades she ceases to be a coquette, and becomes a *beato* or devotee. She renounces the vanities of the world, attends mass several times a day, makes frequent confessions, and takes up her abode during Lent in a house of penitence. . . . At home she sinks into a cipher, scarcely more regarded than a piece of worn out furniture" (603). The author continues to list more humiliations the woman of Lima suffers once her "reign" has ended, showing us the other side of this idealized world or feminitopia.

<sup>16</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Politics of Friendship*, trans. George Collins (London and New York: Verso, 1997), 26.

From 2009 to 2015 Boko Haram insurgency claimed the lives of more than 13,000 people. The group has intensified its attacks on security agents and their formations, top governmental establishments, schools, Mosques, and the general populace. The group kidnapped 250 schoolgirls in Chibok in April 2014. The threat posed by the group is undermining the existence of Nigeria as one sovereign political territory. In August 2014, the sect leader declared areas under their control as new Islamic Caliphate which would be governed according to strict Islamic laws. The objective of this study is to examine Paul B. Rich and Isabelle Duyvesteyn's handbook of insurgency and counterinsurgency gives us an opportunity to survey the state of the art in "orthodox" counterinsurgency thinking. This "orthodox" approach appears to dominate the "counterinsurgency industry" and could be argued to represent an "interpretive" or "epistemic" community. Positivism is often considered to include the following: an emphasis on observation in the development of knowledge; the generation of hypotheses and laws that can be tested; the accumulation of facts that provide the basis for laws; the belief that science can and must be conducted in a value free way that is objective; a clear distinction between scientific and normative statements, accompanied. The Violence of Insurgency and Counter-Insurgency. Permitting Violence: Dirty Wars and Violence Actors. Laws of War, Combatants, and Non-Combatants. It is not that political struggles between imperialists and their opponents were irrelevant to violence and the ends of empire, but instead to indicate that violence in the late colonial world was rarely as binary as fighting "for" or "against" empire. There are multiple reasons for this violence, most being directly related to social standing, but remote from any unifying decolonization narrative.