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Motorboats, cargo ships, lifeboats, and cruise ships: Third Culture Literature is awash with navigation. The term Third Culture Literature (TCL) refers to fiction created by adult Third Culture Kids,¹ whereas Third Culture Kids (TCK) are individuals who, due to their parents' careers, spent a significant part of their formative years outside their passport countries. Central to the experience of internationally mobile childhoods 'is the social-psychological construct of "liminality"'.² In liminal 'in-between' spaces, individuals are on the threshold, they are 'no longer part of the past and not yet part of the new beginning'.³ As Schaetti and Ramsey point out, 'for multi-movers, the experience of liminal space becomes the most constant, lived experience'.⁴

As I intend to show, voyaging repeatedly 'betwixt and between' places,⁵ ships in TCL aptly symbolize the experiences of TCKs and their everlasting liminal states. Raised in many regions and intermittently transitioning from one culture to the next, in adulthood, TCKs often lack a sense of belonging to a particular country and culture. TCKs, therefore, frequently reject limiting categorizations in terms of citizenship. Home for them is not anchored to a place but to a 'nation-less' and 'placeless' expatriate community. Ships in

¹ In TCK discourse, the term TCK is widely used for individuals who are either growing up (children) or who grew up (adults) with their expatriate parents in many countries, so that the term Adult Third Culture Kids is generally seldom adopted.

² Barbara Schaetti, and Sheila Ramsey. 'The Global Nomad Experience: Living in Liminality'. Originally published in *Mobility, The Monthly Magazine of the Employee Relocation Council* 20 (September 1999). Accessed via *Transition Dynamics*, Web, 20 August 2017. In this article, Barbara Schaetti and Sheila Ramsey refer to TCKs as 'global nomads'.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ See Victor Turner. 'Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in *Rites de Passage*.' *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1967. pp. 93-111.

international waters (where there is no single sovereignty) thus also mirror the lack of citizenship of many TCKs.⁶

Some of the TCL novelists who adopt boats in their narratives are Alice Greenway (as the daughter of a foreign correspondent she grew up in Hong Kong, Bangkok, Jerusalem and Washington D.C.), and the ‘diplobrats’ Yann Martel (who was raised in Spain, Alaska, Canada, Costa Rica, France and Mexico),⁷ Nicholas Shakespeare (whose childhood was spent in Brazil, the Argentine Republic, Peru, Cambodia and Great Britain), and Elif Shafak (who grew up in France, Spain, Jordan, Germany and Turkey).⁸ In their novels, readers come across an Indian boy and a Bengal tiger in a lifeboat adrift in the Pacific Ocean (*Life of Pi*);⁹ a disturbed boy who is rescued by a childless couple from a shipwrecked boat in the Tasman Sea (*Secrets of the Sea*);¹⁰ a girl who witnesses the death of her sister in a motorboat accident in the South China Sea (*White Ghost Girls*);¹¹ and a 12-year-old Indian boy who sails to the port of Istanbul with a white Asian elephant on a caravel (*The Architect’s Apprentice*).¹² In all of these novels boat adventures mark the transition from one phase of life to another. These narratives often involve international voyaging in childhood, obviously mirroring the TCK experience.¹³

⁶ This article’s title is inspired by John Agard’s poem (1998) ‘Remember the Ship’. Here John Agard writes: ‘I say remember the ship in citizenship’. For this poem see John Agard. ‘Remember the Ship’. *Writing Black Britain 1948-1998. An Interdisciplinary Anthology*. Ed. James Procter. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000. pp. 258-9; and for further discussion on this poem, see Mark Stein. *Black British Literature: Novels of Transformation*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2004. p. 106. Furthermore, I use for this title Antje Rauwerda’s phrase ‘adrift in international waters’, which she employs when examining Pi’s journey through the TCK lens. See Antje Rauwerda. *The Writer and the Overseas Childhood: The Third Culture Literature of Kingsolver, McEwan and Others*. Jefferson NC: McFarland, 2012. p. 24.

⁷ In TCK discourse, the term ‘diplomats’ is used to describe the offspring of diplomats who grew up in many countries. Other terms such as ‘military brats’, ‘missionary kids’ and ‘business brats’ are also often used.

⁸ For further Third Culture Literature novelists, see Antje Rauwerda, *The Writer*; Rauwerda’s TCL blog thirdcultureliteratureblogspot.de; and Jessica Sanfilippo Schulz. ‘Marketing Transnational Childhoods: The Bio Blurbs of Third Culture Novelists’. *Transnational Literature* 9.1 (November 2016): pp. 1-18.

⁹ Yann Martel. *Life of Pi*. Edinburgh: Canongate, 2002.

¹⁰ Nicholas Shakespeare. *Secrets of the Sea*. London: Harvill Secker, 2007.

¹¹ Alice Greenway. *White Ghost Girls*. London: Atlantic Books, 2006.

¹² Elif Shafak. *The Architect’s Apprentice*. New York & London: Viking, 2014.

¹³ Michael Ondaatje’s *The Cat’s Table* is another obvious TC novel about the sea passage of a young boy. See Antje Rauwerda’s analysis of this novel ‘Third Culture Time and Place: Michael Ondaatje’s *The Cat’s Table*.’ *Mosaic: An Interdisciplinary Critical Journal* 49.3 (2016): pp. 39-53. For further discussion on the concept of rites of passage in this novels, see Laura Savu Walker. ‘Rites of Passage: Moving Hearts and Transforming

Although the TCK experience comprises *worldwide* travelling, TCK research has been criticized for its Anglo-Americancentric views.¹⁴ As Meyer points out, the term TCK ‘is very often associated with children of expatriate families attending international schools’.¹⁵ Accordingly, the majority of TCK research has been carried out in the realm of international schools where English is the dominant language (and in a parallel manner, English is the internationally recognized language of the sea). Likewise, up until today, only works written in English have been correlated with novelists’ international hypermobile childhoods. In fact, both TCK scholars Rauwerda, who coined the term TCL,¹⁶ and Bell-Villada solely interpret texts written in English through the TCK lens.¹⁷ Thus, in the sea of TCL, I deliberately fished for authors who did not write their works in English. Consequently, the motif of boat travels will be examined in the two novels *Daughter of Fortune* and *The Lamentations of Zeno*.¹⁸ Isabel Allende originally wrote *Daughter of Fortune* in Spanish.¹⁹ As a ‘diplobrat’, Isabel

Memories in Michael Ondaatje's *The Cat's Table*. *ARIEL: A Review of International English Literature* 45, 1-2 (2014): 35-57.

¹⁴ Much research has been carried out on TCKs in Japan (referred to as *kikoku-shijos* and *kaigai-shijos*) too. Yet, new areas of research are needed. For further discussion, see Richard Pearce. ‘Afterword’. *Migration, Diversity, and Education: Beyond Third Culture Kids*. Eds. Saija Benjamin, and Fred Dervin. London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2015. pp. 233-48.

¹⁵ Heather Meyer. ‘Boundaries and the Restriction of Mobility within International School Communities: A Case Study from Germany’. *Migration, Diversity, and Education: Beyond Third Culture Kids*. Eds. Saija Benjamin, and Fred Dervin. London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2015. p. 59.

¹⁶ See Antje Rauwerda. ‘Not Your Typical ‘Diaspora’ or ‘Third World Cosmopolitan’: Unexpectedly International Writing’. *Wasafiri* 25.3 (2010): pp. 16-23.

¹⁷ See Gene Bell-Villada. ‘On Jean Rhys, Barbara Kingsolver, and Myself: Reflections on a Problem That Has No Set Name’. *Writing Out of Limbo: International Childhoods, Global Nomads and Third Culture Kids*. Eds. Gene Bell-Villada, and Nina Sichel. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011. pp. 411-25. Bell-Villada has not written works on Latin American novels through a TCK lens, however, he has indeed written and spoken about US Latino authors from this point of view. Those authors, as Bell-Villada informed me, write in English, yet their perspective is a bi-cultural one. Carly McLaughlin also analyses an Anglophone novel through the Cross Cultural Kid lens. For Ruth Van Reken, Cross Cultural Kids are individuals who were raised in two or more cultural environments for a significant period of time. This umbrella term includes, for example, TCKs, children of immigrants, refugees, and minorities. See Ruth Van Reken, ‘Third Culture Kids: Prototypes for Understanding Other Cross-Cultural Kids’. *Crossculturalkid.org*. 29 July 2007, Web, 20 May 2016. See Carly McLaughlin. ‘Childhood, Migration, and Identity in Chris Cleave’s *The Other Hand*’. *Transcultural Identities in Contemporary Literature*. Eds. Irene Gilsenan Nordin, Julie Hansen, and Carmen Zamorano Llena. Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2013. pp. 47-67.

¹⁸ Other TCL novelists, who do not only write in English are, for example, Mari Akasaka (Japanese), Nina Bouraoui (French), Amélie Nothomb (French), Camila Raznovich (Italian), Elif Shafak (Turkish and English) and Folco Terzani (Italian).

¹⁹ Isabel Allende. *Daughter of Fortune*, trans. Margaret Sayers Peden. London: Flamingo, 2000.

Allende grew up in Chile, Peru, Bolivia and Lebanon.²⁰ Trojanow's *The Lamentations of Zeno* was originally written in German.²¹ At the age of six, in 1971, Ilija Trojanow fled communism in Bulgaria together with his family and then lived in Yugoslavia, Italy, Germany and Kenya as a child.²² Adopting Rauwerda's TCK reading of fiction, these two novels, by authors who clearly share the experience of extreme international mobility during childhood, will be examined in an attempt to shift TCL a few nautical miles away from Anglo-Americancentrism.

Before embarking on this analytical journey, Rauwerda's new approach for studying Third Culture Literature will be explained. Subsequently, by comparing the stages of ship travel to the stages of van Gennep's rites of passage, the analytical part will be divided into three phases, preliminal (separation), liminal (transition) and postliminal (incorporation). These phases resemble the departure, navigation and arrival stages of the boat travels in the above mentioned works of Allende and Trojanow. It will be argued that floating on international waters, in 'nation-less' lands, the sea journeys of the two protagonists Eliza and Zeno epitomize not only the multiple relocations of TCKs during childhood, but also their notions of fluid identities and belonging in adulthood.

Travel Preparations: Third Culture Passages

Prior to 2010, the term TCK was used exclusively by sociologists, anthropologists, psychologists, and educators, but never before by literary scholars. As we have seen above, TCK is used in sociology to describe 'children who experience a high level of international mobility while they are growing up'.²³ Generally, this term is 'applied to those who are

²⁰ For Allende's biography see, for example, Tim McNeese. *Isabel Allende*. New York: Chelsea House, 2006.

²¹ *The Lamentations of Zeno*, trans. Philip Boehm. London and Brooklyn: Verso, 2016.

²² See Julian Preece. *Ilija Trojanow*. Bern: Peter Lang, 2013.

²³ Danau Tanu. 'Toward an Interdisciplinary Analysis of the Diversity of "Third Culture Kids"'. *Migration, Diversity, and Education: Beyond Third Culture Kids*. Eds. Saija Benjamin, and Fred Dervin. London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2015. p. 13.

relatively economically privileged and move due to their parents' career choices, typically in the corporate, diplomatic, military, religious (missionary), or NGO sectors'.²⁴

Ruth Hill Useem, an American anthropologist and sociologist, was the first scholar to analyse this phenomenon in the 1950s. She believed that these transient children neither belong to their parents' culture (the 'first' culture), nor to the new host culture (the 'second' culture), but belong to a 'third' expatriate and international culture of their own. After extensive research in India, Ruth Hill Useem proposed that the subcultures of the expatriate communities 'generated by colonial administrators, missionaries, businessmen, and military personnel-had its own peculiarities, slightly different origins, distinctive styles, and stratification systems, but all were closely interlocked'.²⁵

For David Pollock and Ruth Van Reken too, TCKs share common characteristics and similar experiences. In 1999, Pollock and Van Reken expanded on Ruth Hill Useem's theories and published *Third Culture Kids: Growing Up Among Worlds*.²⁶ They assert that TCKs develop 'a sense of relationship to all of the cultures while not having full ownership in any. Elements from each culture are incorporated into the life experience, but the sense of belonging is in relationship to others of similar experience'.²⁷ As Tanu points out, a 'highly mobile childhood is punctuated by life experiences that are fragmented by each move, which affects identity development'.²⁸ Likewise, Benjamin and Dervin assert about TCKs that 'Shadowing their parents' career or lifestyle choices, children have little or no say about their life trajectories in childhood. Appreciated or not, mobility becomes part of these children's everyday lives and often part of their identities'.²⁹

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ruth Hill Useem. 'Third Cultural Factors in Educational Change'. *Cultural Challenges to Education: The Influence of Cultural Factors in School Learning*. Eds. Cole S. Brembeck, and Walker H. Hill. Lexington, MA: Lexington Book, 1973. p. 122.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 19.

²⁸ Tanu, p. 20

²⁹ Saija Benjamin, and Fred Dervin. 'Introduction'. *Migration, Diversity, and Education: Beyond Third Culture Kids*. Eds. Saija Benjamin, and Fred Dervin. London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2015. p. 8.

Accordingly, as adults, TCKs must struggle with common challenges such as identity questions, unresolved grief (due to the continual loss of people, places, pets and possessions), ‘restlessness’ and ‘rootlessness’.³⁰ Transposing these theories to literary studies, Antje Rauwerda innovatively analyzes the works written by seventeen adult TCKs to prove that ‘there is a field of literature that, most simply, shares characteristics reflecting the third culture context out of which it is produced’.³¹ This Third Culture Literature (TCL), as she coins it, includes any ‘writing produced by a third culture author’,³² and TCL novels share common characteristics like dislocation, ‘losses entailed in mobility’, strong cultural awareness, disenfranchisement and feelings of guilt.³³ Not fitting within national literatures, Rauwerda claims that TCL novels do, of course, comprise features common to ‘diasporic’, ‘(third world) cosmopolitan’ and ‘postcolonial writing’, but these existing classifications are inapt as TCL authors do not have one homeland and TCL accordingly displays ‘multiple rather than binary displacement’.³⁴ Before Rauwerda’s new category, TCL novels, like many TCK individuals, did not have a proper place (in literature). Rauwerda has thus managed to ‘free’ TC fiction from its liminal position.

Christian Triebel also proposes new anchored sites in TCK discourse. The scholar firstly argues that ‘TCKs reside in liminal space, which is balanced on the “threshold”, betwixt and between other places’.³⁵ Secondly, he adopts Marc Augé’s concept of ‘non-place’ to understand the experience of TCKs, who feel ‘nation-less’.³⁶ Finally, Triebel proposes that in claiming non-place as home, TCKs can feel at ease in this ‘space beyond

³⁰ Pollock, and Van Reken, pp. 121-9.

³¹ Rauwerda, *The Writer*, p. 23.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 20

³⁴ Antje Rauwerda. ‘Not Your Typical ‘Diaspora’ or ‘Third World Cosmopolitan’: Unexpectedly International Writing’. *Wasafiri* 25.3 (2010): p. 21.

³⁵ Christian Triebel. ‘Non-Place Kids? Marc Augé’s Non-Place and Third Culture Kids’. *Migration, Diversity, and Education: Beyond Third Culture Kids*. Eds. Saija Benjamin, and Fred Dervin. London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2015. p. 95.

³⁶ Joanna Yoshi Grote. ‘NatioNILism: The Space of Nation-Less Belonging’. *Migration, Diversity, and Education: Beyond Third Culture Kids*. Eds. Saija Benjamin, and Fred Dervin. London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2015. p. 102.

place', which is a 'higher place'.³⁷ Augé's liminal places, Triebel explains, are 'designed solely to be passed through and to connect other places of importance'.³⁸ These 'fluid places with no permanence' are sites such as 'airplanes, highways, super-malls and bullet trains as well as the facilities related to these such as hotels, lobbies, stations, airports and parking lots'.³⁹ An obvious addendum to Triebel's list are boats and ports. For Foucault too, the ship not only is a placeless place, but it is such a 'deviant' site to the extent that he calls it 'the heterotopia *par excellence*'.⁴⁰ Foucault asserts that the 'boat 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'.⁴¹

Not only is the symbol of the vessel important, but the patterns of a ships' journeys are just as significant. The stages of boat travels are similar to those of 'rites of passage',⁴² also referred to as 'transition rites'. The term 'rites of passage' was coined by van Gennep who intensively studied the ceremonial rites of various cultures. The anthropologist (who interestingly experienced international mobility as a child) discovered that many of these rites share a tripartite pattern. Van Gennep consequently named the three stages of rites of passage: separation (initiates are separated from the previous social statuses), margin (initiates are in a liminal, neither here nor there state, they are in betwixt and between zones) and reaggregation (initiates now have a newly defined status and identity). The cultural anthropologist Victor Turner subsequently expanded upon van Gennep's concept of liminality. For him, the liminal state was not solely a transitional phase but could also be a place of permanence.⁴³ Turner, thus, promoted the terms preliminal, liminal and postliminal,

³⁷ Triebel, p. 100.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 88.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 92

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Foucault, p. 27.

⁴² See Arnold van Gennep. *The Rites of Passage*, trans. Monika Vizedom, and Gabrielle Caffee. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961.

⁴³ See Turner, 'Betwixt and Between', pp. 93-111.

which I adopt too in order to emphasize the concept of liminality, which, as we have seen above, is for TCKs often a constant condition.

Preliminality: Silent Separations

Both the protagonists of *Daughter of Fortune* and *The Lamentations of Zeno*, embark on life-changing sea voyages burdened with losses. Respectively, Eliza flees Chile on a cargo ship to seek the man she loves in California, whereas Zeno is working on board an international cruise ship in the Antarctic region. Eliza nearly dies in the hold of the ship, where she is hiding, and for Zeno, this is his last journey. In this first phase of gathering what will be needed for the journey, of farewells, and of leaving all behind, Eliza and Zeno are preparing to die their old lives and to shed their previous identities and origins.

Multiple losses and unresolved grief are central motifs in TCK discourse and TCL.

Discussing losses in TCL, Rauwerda writes:

The key differences between the losses one sees in third culture literature and those one sees in other types of (im)migrant writing are that third culture literature represents the problem both of yearning for something that may not have existed in the first place *and* of mourning a loss that many people fail to recognize as a loss at all because of the assumption that travel, especially for privileged expats, is categorically a mind-broadening, enriching, *good thing*. . . What one sees in third culture literature is more vertiginous: mourning does not reaffirm connection, but rather emphasizes disconnection and the nonexistence of a homeland.⁴⁴

If a loss is not recognized it can lead to unresolved grief, which, according to Pollock and Van Reken, is the second greatest challenge TCKs must face.⁴⁵ As Zilber points out, for TCKs unresolved grief is ‘due to repeated goodbyes, leavings and loss of close friends, relatives, nannies, pets, special home country activities, characteristics of a cultural group’.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Rauwerda, *The Writer*, p. 36

⁴⁵ Pollock, and Van Reken, p. 165.

⁴⁶ Ettie Zilber. *Third Culture Kids: The Children of Educators in International Schools*. Melton, Woodbridge: John Catt, 2009. p. 63.

Denying their sadness upon departure, the uninvolved farewells of Eliza and Zeno mirror the lonely bereavement of TCKs.

Escaping from her family who wish to send her from Valparaiso to London, Eliza's is a 'silent farewell'.⁴⁷ She is indeed assaulted by sadness, but the family who raised her must not suspect that she is leaving. Thus there are no tears and around her people fail to recognize her loss. Only her 'nana', Mama Fresia is aware of Eliza's plans. But although the maid, who cared for the girl for seventeen years 'was the second pillar of Eliza's childhood',⁴⁸ their farewell is also restrained: 'The girl and her nana embraced for a long time. They knew they would never see each other again, but neither shed tears'.⁴⁹ In like manner, having repeatedly relocated, Zeno's final departure from the port of the southernmost city in the world is reserved: 'We set sail at last light. Our leave-taking is perfunctory: no one waves goodbye'.⁵⁰

Reading Yann Martel's *Life of Pi* 'via the TCK lens',⁵¹ Rauwerda discusses losses in this quintessential TCL novel and writes that Pi, the protagonist, 'loses everything'.⁵² Suddenly Pi is deprived of his 'Indian past',⁵³ his family, his friends, and his identity. For Rauwerda, 'Pi's transformations exaggerate the process by which third culture kids alter their identities (developing new languages or accents, habits, styles of dress, friendships, food preferences) in order to "survive" in new contexts'.⁵⁴ Eliza's sea trip, like that of Pi, signifies the perdition of all that she possesses.

At the port of Valparaiso, during Eliza's phase of separation, which is the beginning stage of her rites of (sea) passage, Eliza is an initiate. In abandoning her 'English lady's

⁴⁷ Allende, p. 150.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 12.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 151.

⁵⁰ Trojanow, p. 14.

⁵¹ Bell-Villada, p. 424.

⁵² Rauwerda, *The Writer*, p. 24.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 13.

clothing’,⁵⁵ and donning ‘a pair of baggy trousers and a worn smock’,⁵⁶ Eliza symbolically sheds her old identity:

Eliza realized that this was not the time for scruples; the ship was leaving that morning and the last dinghies were loading on the stragglers’ luggage. She removed her straw bonnet, undid the buttons of her kidskin boots and her dress, untied the ribbons of her petticoats and, nearly swooning with shame, gestured to Tao Chi’en to help her undo her corset. As the articles of a young English lady’s clothing piled up on the floor one by one, she was losing contact with known reality and irreversibly entering the strange illusion that would be her life in the months to come. She had the clear sensation of beginning a new story in which she was both protagonist and narrator.⁵⁷

Whereas Eliza’s departure represents the loss of childhood and the beginning of a new adventure in California, in his early sixties, Zeno Hintermeier is embarking on his last journey. Zeno, a Bavarian glaciologist, has already suffered many losses and is a grieving man who ‘is tired of being human’.⁵⁸ Having ‘devoted his scholarly life’ to an Alpine glacier that has melted,⁵⁹ or rather ‘died’ according to Zeno,⁶⁰ his work at a scientific institute is over. Similarly to his glacier, Zeno’s marriage and social life have disintegrated. He no longer has friends and has lost his wife: ‘When I separated from my institute . . . my wife separated from me’.⁶¹ Furthermore, he owns few material possessions: ‘The move from the house in Solln to a furnished one-room apartment in Moosbach was very different than the previous relocation. Everything I still chose to call my own fit in Hölbl’s VW Sportwagen’.⁶² Following a colleague’s (Hölbl) suggestion, Zeno is now giving lectures for Antarctic tourists aboard the international cruise ship *MS Hansen*. This is Zeno’s fourth year on the ship, and his new beginning encompasses his recent duty on board. From lecturer ‘tasked with

⁵⁵ Allende, p. 152.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 151.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 152.

⁵⁸ Trojanow, p. 145.

⁵⁹ Ulf Zimmermann. ‘*The Lamentations of Zeno* by Ilija Trojanow’. *Worldliteraturetoday.org*. Sept. 2016, Web, 30 Sept. 2016.

⁶⁰ Trojanow, p. 62.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 137.

educating the vacationers’,⁶³ he has just been elevated to expedition leader as the previous ‘expedition leader had been taken unexpectedly to the hospital in Buenos Aires with a suspected case of swine flu’.⁶⁴ This is where Zeno’s last journey begins and where he starts writing the notebook that readers are allowed to view (thus, like Eliza upon her departure, Zeno is both protagonist and narrator). Ironically, it is this change of role on board that will be life-changing. As expedition leader, now he will also have to escort groups of passengers to sites and two of these trips on ice will be fatal.

This is a phase of separation, of sudden changes for Eliza and Zeno, who suffer many losses. Yet, it also marks a beginning in new geographical locations, which will occur once the ship is in motion, on liminal waters.

Liminality: Surviving

TCL novels contain four key characteristics according to Rauwerda: disenfranchisement, dislocation, guilt and loss.⁶⁵ These four features can be found also in Allende’s *Daughter of Fortune* and Trojanow’s *The Lamentations of Zeno*, particularly during the sea passages of the main protagonists.

For Turner ‘[l]iminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial’.⁶⁶ Discussing liminality and how, as ‘threshold people’,⁶⁷ TCKs can belong to these spaces, Grote poses the thought-provoking question: ‘Does belonging “between” places still mean “between” or at a certain point of saturation, does this “space between” gain substance and become something it is own right?’.⁶⁸ After interviewing TCKs and finding that ‘not belonging to a country was

⁶³ Ibid., p. 4.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Rauwerda, *The Writer*, p. 33.

⁶⁶ Victor Turner. *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*. Chicago: Aldine, 1969. p. 95.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Grote, p. 107.

part of their identity,⁶⁹ she coins the term ‘NatioNILism’, which compellingly embodies ‘this concept of a belonging tied strongly and proudly to a comfortable lack of belonging to a nation’.⁷⁰ Rather than it being a ‘deficient place’, Triebel similarly sees the liminal ‘non-places’ of TCKs as a ‘higher place’,⁷¹ and as ‘new centres of significance where various people, commodities and ideas come together’.⁷²

Ilija Trojanow, the author of *The Lamentations of Zeno*, speaks too of confluent spaces. Similarly to hotels, which are ‘non-places’, typically frequented by the ‘supermodern solitary traveller’,⁷³ he states in an interview that ships ‘host people from different backgrounds and nationalities and thus become microcosms of cosmopolitan and intercultural realities’.⁷⁴ Fittingly, for this voyage to Antarctica, or ‘Terra Nullius’, as Zeno calls it,⁷⁵ an area which does not belong to any one country, Trojanow chooses longitudes and latitudes as chapter titles. Being imaginary, these circles, which are vital for navigators and explorers, evoke the third culture of TCKs, which is an imaginary nation-less homeland. During its journey, Trojanow’s cruise ship, the MS *Hansen*, in *The Lamentations of Zeno* is inhabited by disenfranchised, ‘nation-less’ individuals: ‘And each of us is a refugee in his own weird way: in the words of El Albatros, our Uruguayan ornithologist, “We’re really just a bunch of nowhere people”’.⁷⁶

The ornithologist is Uruguayan, Beate, one of the travel guides is German and speaks ‘English with a German accent, German with a hint of Spanish, and Spanish with Chilean intonation’.⁷⁷ Moreover, the doctor is Brazilian, the pianist British and ‘hardworking

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 112.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 111.

⁷¹ Triebel, p. 100.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 92.

⁷⁴ Arianna Dagnino. *Transcultural Writers and Novels in the Age of Global Mobility*. West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2015. p. 37.

⁷⁵ Trojanow, p. 33.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 5.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 4.

Filipinos . . . make up most of the crew'.⁷⁸ Comprising English, Germans, Americans, Dutch, Swiss, Norwegians, Brazilians, Canadians, New Zealanders and Austrians, the 220 privileged passengers come from different backgrounds too. Thus Zeno must give his talks in both English and German.

Eliza and her journey also represent the confluence of different backgrounds, dislocation and the 'crossings of several boundaries'.⁷⁹ As Reutter writes, Eliza is:

. . . in fact the product of a clandestine affair between her adoptive mother's sailor-brother and a poor Chilean woman, [and] this beautiful girl becomes the more-than daughter of the passionate but childless English aristocrat Miss Rose Sommers. Eliza . . . can thus be described as "international".⁸⁰

The *Emilia*, the ship that takes Eliza to San Francisco, is 'a ship of French registry',⁸¹ and its final port is also an international setting where people from all over the world meet:

Europeans fleeing wars, plagues, and tyrannies; Americans, ambitious and short-tempered; blacks pursuing freedom; Oregonians and Russians dressed in deerskin, like Indians; Mexicans, Chileans, and Peruvians; Australian bandits; starving Chinese peasants who were risking their necks by violating the imperial order against leaving their country. All races flowed together in the muddy alleyways of San Francisco.⁸²

Allende's vessel is also a melting pot of several kinds of animals and individuals. In fact, the *Emilia* sails 'from Valparaiso on the radiant morning of February 18, 1849, carrying eighty-seven passengers of male sex, five women, six cows, eight hogs, three cats, eighteen sailors, a Dutch captain, a Chilean pilot, and a Chinese cook'.⁸³

The two ships *Emilia* and *Hansen*, embodying multilingual and transcultural displacement, inhabited by fluid, 'water people',⁸⁴ evoke the childhood sites of many TCKs:

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 25.

⁷⁹ Cheli Reutter. 'Manifold Destinies: Isabel Allende's *Daughter of Fortune* and Toni Morrison's *Paradise*'. *Crossing Borders in Literature of the American West*. Eds. Reginald Dyck, and Cheli Reutter. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009. p. 199.

⁸⁰ Ibid., pp. 202-3.

⁸¹ Allende, p. 148.

⁸² Ibid., p. 223.

⁸³ Ibid., p. 148.

⁸⁴ Arianna Dagnino uses this term when discussing transcultural writers, authors who like TC novelists, have travelled extensively. See Dagnino, *Transcultural Writers*, p. 162.

international schools, the ‘cosmopolitan hubs for expatriate families’.⁸⁵ For Meyer, the international school is a ‘global network – a space, which accepts, and cultivates a culturally diverse population joined together through shared nomadic experiences’.⁸⁶ Emulating the setting of these particular schools, ships sail on international waters, and are under jurisdiction of the flag state. This ‘superfluent’ flag state symbolizes the citizenship of TCKs, who commonly do not feel attached to their passport country. Captains have full legal authority over their ships and maritime law requires that ships take measures to provide safe passage. Yet, jurisdiction is difficult to resolve when something goes wrong on board, hence the ship also symbolizes the ‘chance to escape all order’.⁸⁷ Escaping order, with the help of the Chinese cook Tao Chi’en, Eliza is taken illegally on board: ‘Eliza was taken aboard in a sack over the back of a stevedore, one of many loading cargo and luggage in Valparaiso’.⁸⁸ Tao Chi’en is the only person who knows of her existence on board. The ship is thus the perfect place for hidden secrets, one of the key themes in TCL:

In third culture literature generally, one sees plots in which neocolonial guilt catalyzes a secret action. Characters feel bad for getting away with their privilege and ignorance; as an analogue, those same characters commit some manner of secret crime that they also get away with . . . secretive guilt is replaced by flagrant sexual precociousness.⁸⁹

Secrets prevail throughout the first part of Allende’s novel: Eliza’s origins, the past love affairs of her adoptive family and her furtive (‘sexually precocious’) nights with her lover Joaquin, who is ‘tormented by the worst suspicions, because he could not imagine such natural sensuality in a sixteen-year-old girl whose horizons were the walls of her home’.⁹⁰ Their hidden passion leads to pregnancy, which is why Eliza furtively escapes Chile to look for her lover who has moved to California.

⁸⁵ Meyer, p. 59.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Laura Savu Walker. ‘Rites of Passage: Moving Hearts and Transforming Memories in Michael Ondaatje’s *The Cat’s Table*’. *ARIEL: A Review of International English Literature* 45, 1-2 (2014): p. 43.

⁸⁸ Allende, p. 149.

⁸⁹ Rauwerda, *The Writer*, p. 23.

⁹⁰ Allende, p. 114.

Hiding in the storeroom of the ship, Eliza's only 'contact with the outside world' is Tao Chi'en.⁹¹ But whereas the girl has found a good refuge on board the cargo ship, on Zeno's cruise ship, one is never alone, not even 'at the end of the world'.⁹² As Zeno comments, on 'a ship at sea it's hard to get out of the way, the passageways are straight and narrow'.⁹³ On board the MS *Hansen*, everyone is 'quickly located: within a few days it's clear who has set down roots where'.⁹⁴ Yet, this exposure does not prevent Zeno, who like Trojanow has no single 'fixed' belonging,⁹⁵ from secretly planning his final dangerous escape.

Before adopting a new role, the transition phase as described by van Gennep and Turner, with its many dangers, must be experienced. Douglas writes about these dangers:

Danger lies in transitional states, simply because transition is neither one state nor the next, it is indefinable. The person who must pass from one to another is himself in danger and emanates danger to others. The danger is controlled by ritual which precisely separates him from his old status, segregates him for a time and then publicly declares his entry to his new status.⁹⁶

For Eliza and Zeno, on their respective ships, these dangers lead to losses, such as death, as will be seen. In fact, Turner associates liminal entities to death, 'liminality is frequently likened to death, to being in the womb, to invisibility, to darkness, to bisexuality, to the wilderness, and to an eclipse of the sun or moon'.⁹⁷ Likewise, Johnson writes that during sea travel: 'Safety, security, familiarity, life and the finite are exposed to risk, vulnerability, the unknown, death and infinity'.⁹⁸

⁹¹ Ibid., p. 149.

⁹² Trojanow, p. 88.

⁹³ Ibid., p. 91.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ In an interview to Arianna Dagnino, Trojanow says: 'I feel I have many other forms of belonging'. See Dagnino, *Transcultural Writers*, p. 31.

⁹⁶ Mary Douglas. *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*. London: Routledge, 1991. p. 96.

⁹⁷ Turner, *The Ritual Process*, p. 95.

⁹⁸ Peter Johnson. 'The Ship: Navigating the Myths, Metaphors and Realities of Foucault's Heterotopia Par Excellence'. *Heterotopian Studies* (2016): p. 11.

Moving from country to country as children, TCKs repeatedly lose precious people, places, pets, possessions. ‘Dying’ their previous lives, over and over again, they must often reinvent themselves.⁹⁹ Embarking on the MS *Hansen*, Zeno has already left behind most of his possessions, his marriage, family home, job as full professor, and according to his ex-wife, has lost even more than this and describes him as ‘a man on the verge of losing it at any second’.¹⁰⁰ Once on board he also loses his name. ‘Mr. Iceberger’ is his new sea name and some of the crew have never used his real name, ‘and others aren’t sure how to pronounce it’.¹⁰¹ Furthermore, working on international cruise ships, he is anxious not to lose his mother tongue and practices German by reciting poems in order to keep his original language ‘crystal clear’.¹⁰²

Unquestionably, Zeno’s biggest bereavement is ‘his’ glacier: ‘It was no longer possible to offset the loss. We were aging together, the glacier and I, but the glacier was well ahead of me when it came to dying’.¹⁰³ Not only are ‘animals and humans on same level’ in Trojanow’s novel,¹⁰⁴ but obviously nature too seeing that Zeno’s glacier is personified: ‘In the summer before my glacier died’.¹⁰⁵ Zeno sees his attachment to his glacier as a ‘marriage’ and ‘a union of love’.¹⁰⁶ On two of his last excursions as expedition leader, Zeno witnesses the slow extinction of his beloved nature, and harm being carried out by man to birds, specifically penguins. Firstly, at the Chilean Antarctic base ‘Eduardo Frei’, Zeno fights with a Chilean soldier, who is smoking on the ice, because he envisages the soldier’s ‘butt landing on the thick mass of feathers’.¹⁰⁷ Subsequently, a passenger, Ms. Morgenthau, accidentally kills a penguin on Half Moon Island. This dangerous incident not only leaves

⁹⁹ See Tanu, p. 106.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 109.

¹⁰¹ Trojanow, p. 5.

¹⁰² Ibid., p. 97.

¹⁰³ Ibid., p. 45.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 148.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 62.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., p. 44.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 127.

Ms. Morgenthau ‘clearly in shock’,¹⁰⁸ but Zeno too, is severely stunned and due to his carelessness the captain thereupon discharges him. Significantly, then, when Zeno, as a consequence of these outings, hijacks the ship at the end of the novel, only Ms. Morgenthau, ‘sound asleep because of the powerful antibiotics’,¹⁰⁹ is on board. And when Zeno finally leaves the ship in order to be eternally reunited with his ice (‘I will fly until my blood has run to ice’),¹¹⁰ it is Ms. Morgenthau who is left entirely alone on the MS *Hansen*. At the end of the novel, readers are informed that the Special Forces will have to investigate whether she truly knew nothing about the hijacking, but Zeno has apparently already condemned her and for him, she is obviously guilty of having committed an offense to nature.

Alone, with just the assistance of Tao Chi’en, on board the cargo ship *Emilia*, Eliza experiences several losses and transitions. This sea journey represents the loss of her adolescence, of her adoptive family, of Chile, the country she grew up in, of the baby she is carrying, her social status, her nationality, her gender, language and finally her voice too.

Discussing Turner’s concept of liminality, Kirkham writes:

. . . the liminal stage [is] where the status of the participant is reversed and the weak become strong and the strong weak and there is social levelling. The attributes of liminality are always ambiguous; they are betwixt and between, neither here nor there. Rank and status disappear and passivity, humility and nakedness are apparent. *Communitas* arises out of liminality, when social structure appears to be no more and feelings of common humanity are expressed.¹¹¹

No longer strong in the presence of her wealthy British family but hidden in the storeroom of a cargo ship, Eliza’s status vanishes. She depends on a Chinese cook and her ‘only company was the cat, closed in the hold to control the rats, but during the terrible weeks of the sailing the unfortunate animal slowly went crazy, and finally, sadly, Tao Chi’en cut its throat with

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 137.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 158.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p. 157.

¹¹¹ Mavis Kirkham. *Exploring the Dirty Side of Women’s Health*. London and New York: Routledge, 2007. p 112.

his knife'.¹¹² Here we see Eliza losing her 'pet', just like Zeno loses a penguin on his journey. But she also risks much more: 'Almost as soon as the ship left the bay of Valparaiso and was in open water Eliza began to rave'.¹¹³ During this life-changing voyage:

Curled in her burrow in the storeroom, Eliza began to die. To the darkness and the sensation of being walled up in life was added the odor, a foul blend of the contents of bales and boxes, barrels of salted fish, and deposits of ocean extracts crusted on the old planks of the ship.¹¹⁴

Eliza is 'prepared to travel the world buried in a nightmarish hole in order to find her man',¹¹⁵ the man she loved in Chile, but it is in Tao Chi'en that she finds common humanity. Ranks and roles have disappeared in this stage and Tao Chi'en is no longer a servant but a lifesaver. Tao Chi'en, who has travelled extensively and suffered the loss of his wife, looks after Eliza when her condition takes 'a lethal turn'.¹¹⁶ Trained in traditional Chinese medicine, Tao Chi'en assists Eliza whilst she loses her fetus:

For a good part of the night Tao Chi'en sat beside the feverish Eliza. He worked over her weakened body with the limited resources of his bag, his long experience, and a wavering tenderness until she expelled a bloody little mollusc.¹¹⁷

After this miscarriage, he saves Eliza's life: 'To clean out her womb, he inserted his needles in the girl's arms and legs, provoking strong contractions. When he was sure of his results, he sighed with relief'.¹¹⁸ In this moment, nakedness, humility and passivity are all apparent, and Eliza owes her life to this man she barely knows.

Soon before their arrival to California, Eliza recovers and 'Tao Chi'en began gradually cutting back on Eliza's tranquilizing herbs and opium'.¹¹⁹ In order to 'sneak Eliza ashore',¹²⁰ the young woman, takes on the identity of Tao Chi'en's Chinese brother. Upon

¹¹² Allende, p.149.

¹¹³ Ibid., p. 200.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., p. 199.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., p. 203.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., p. 201.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., p. 205.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., p. 215.

¹²⁰ Ibid., p. 219.

arrival at the port of San Francisco, Eliza will thus have to take up, like TCKs upon a move to a new destination, a new residence in a new country, new friends, new habits and a new language. As the issue of language is problematic, Tao Chi'en tells his compatriots on the dinghy (yet another boat trip, proving that the liminal journey for TCKs is a recurrent one) from the ship to the port, that his brother is 'deaf mute and a little slow, so there was no point in trying to communicate with him'.¹²¹ Eliza, thus, loses her voice too.

Returning to Turner's observation that 'liminality is frequently likened to death, to being in the womb, to invisibility, to darkness, to bisexuality, to the wilderness, and to an eclipse of the sun or moon,'¹²² during her sea passage it can be noticed that Eliza has experienced pregnancy and death (her baby), invisibility (her presence is unknown to all other passengers), darkness (in the storeroom), bisexuality (leaving the ship she is a woman dressed up as a man), wilderness (the primitive conditions in the storeroom, with a 'nauseating stench'),¹²³ and ambiguous solar and lunar rhythms ('Weeks went by when Eliza didn't know whether it was night or day').¹²⁴ After surviving this precarious phase, Eliza, like Zeno, is ready to begin a new stage.

Postliminality: Freedom

Criticising the 'disconnect between the idealized sea of poststructuralist theorist and the actual sea encountered by those who engage it',¹²⁵ regarding sea literature, Steinberg proposes that 'we need also to bring the ocean itself into the picture, not just as an *experienced* space but as a dynamic field that - through its movement, through our encounters

¹²¹ Ibid., p. 221.

¹²² Turner, *The Ritual Process*, p. 9.

¹²³ Allende, p. 212.

¹²⁴ Ibid., p. 213.

¹²⁵ Philip Steinberg. 'Of Other Seas: Metaphors and Materialities in Maritime Regions'. *Atlantic Studies* 10:2 (2013): p. 158.

with its movement, and through our efforts to interpret its movement - produces difference even as it unifies'.¹²⁶

Trojanow clearly engages with the ocean 'in all its material complexity'.¹²⁷ In *The Lamentations of Zeno*, he successfully incorporates 'the ocean's geophysicality, not just as a force that impacts humans but as part of a marine assemblage in which humans are just one component'.¹²⁸ In fact, in Trojanow's novel, we see that nature is the most important component for Zeno. Ice, a liminal entity, is interestingly Zeno's speciality and for Steinberg, too, the qualities of ice are significant:

Of all these liminal spaces that are neither purely sea nor purely land, sea-ice holds particular interest, because it is juridically (and cartographically) unquestionably of the sea, but its tactile, functional, and visual properties in many cases more closely resemble land. Meanwhile, although in a different way than water, it is dynamic in both space and time (ice floes melt and form, and they move in space), and this further confounds attempts to place it in either category.¹²⁹

Ice, like individuals who travelled extensively as children, is difficult to place in a fixed category.

In Trojanow's novel, Zeno's sea passage neither represents the postcolonial network of ideas and cultural products, nor the longing for the 'return to origins',¹³⁰ but rather emphasizes impermanence just like 'water is impermanent'.¹³¹ Zeno's glacier is impermanent, a smoking Chilean soldier reiterates the instability of nature, and both the ports Eliza and Zeno reach are places of transience, because the two characters are about to continue their voyages. For the journeys of TCKs, who frequently travel, must go on and, metaphorically, the port is not a destination but a temporary 'non-place'. Thus, the process of

¹²⁶ Ibid., p. 161.

¹²⁷ Ibid., p. 165.

¹²⁸ Ibid., p. 164.

¹²⁹ Ibid. p. 163.

¹³⁰ Jeannie Suk. *Postcolonial Paradoxes in French Caribbean Writing: Césaire, Glissant, Condé*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001. p. 56.

¹³¹ Dagnino, *Transcultural Writers*, p. 162

integration, of post-liminality, in which transformed individuals take on new roles, can be for TCKs a life long task.¹³²

This ‘non-place’ for TCKs, as Triebel argues, is a higher place.¹³³ In fact, it is here, in the port, that Eliza experiences freedom. In these international areas on land (‘half the world’ is in San Francisco making it a confluence of nationalities;¹³⁴ and the Antarctic is a confluence of international research bases), Eliza and Zeno do indeed succeed in adapting, in fact they blend in with their environment to such an extent that they disappear.¹³⁵ Eliza’s new identity and clothing grant ‘her an unfamiliar freedom; she had never felt so invisible’.¹³⁶ Tao Chi’en has become her new family, on the ship he treats Eliza with ‘life-giving kindness’.¹³⁷ And although Eliza chooses to carry on travelling (like many TCKs) and departs again alone to find Joaquin, it is Tao Chi’en who is ultimately Eliza’s true companion, and with him she will be free.

The night before the hijacking, Zeno is finally rid of his distressing nightmares. Once he hijacks the ship the following day and he is alone ‘on a cruise ship that can be steered with a joystick’,¹³⁸ he enjoys the isolation and freedom. Zeno, who does not want to ‘possess’ the Antarctic but wants ‘it to be left in peace’,¹³⁹ removes the ship’s flag from the mast and throws it ironically ‘in the bin marked Plastic Waste’.¹⁴⁰ This all occurs in Terra Nullius, where there should be no national belonging. Yet, the various stops of the ship have shown that the Antarctic too, is full of national stations in which sovereign states reign and the Chilean soldier symbolically rules over nature at Eduardo free base. The Antarctic should

¹³² For further reading regarding this topic see John H. Koo, and Robert N. St. Clair. ‘Rites of Passage across Cultures’. *Intercultural Communication Studies* 1.1 (1991): pp. 131-46.

¹³³ Triebel, p. 100.

¹³⁴ Allende, p. 223.

¹³⁵ Norma McCraig, founder of Global Nomads International, says about TCKs that they are ‘cultural chameleons’. See Pollock, and Van Reken, p. 91.

¹³⁶ Allende, p. 222.

¹³⁷ Reutter, p. 202.

¹³⁸ Trojanow, p. 156.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 156.

also be a safe area for animals, but in the presence of ‘ignorant’ humans, the animals cannot be free. Rejecting labelling according to citizenship, as a TCK, where can one be truly free of national identities? Not in Terra Nullius and soon not even in space. Zeno brilliantly writes in his notebook:

How is it possible that neither the Soviets nor the Americans have launched a highly pregnant woman into space just so she could give birth to the first extraorbital baby and thereby establish a legitimate claim to the solar system, the galaxy and the universe itself?¹⁴¹

As Benjamin and Dervin argue, ‘multi-mobility and constant dislocation craft alternative ways of belonging, independent of geographical ties’.¹⁴² TCK research has shown that TCK individuals belong to a group of people and not a place. Grote’s statement that TCKs in adulthood ‘feel very strongly about place, but about *not* belonging to it’,¹⁴³ is reflected in Zeno’s actions. Without a flag (which is provocatively represented as waste material), Zeno’s ship is a place without citizenship. Zeno, rid of his ties, is now ready to fly. Soon after the fatal excursion with Ms. Morgenthau, Zeno admires an albatross whilst sailing through the ‘Avenue of the Ice Giants’. The bird is Zeno ‘plunging at free-fall speed into nothingness’. Zeno then comments that ‘a moment later and you will no longer appear in the drawing’.¹⁴⁴ Finally, Zeno writes in his notebook that he will soon leave the ship and fly. And this is indeed the last time Zeno appears in the novel. Zeno’s journey on a ship is over. Trojanow’s protagonist has been sailing away, now he is ultimately flying away, until his blood turns forever to (liminal) ice.

The Captain’s Report – Concluding Remarks

Discussing belonging, Trojanow remarks:

¹⁴¹ Ibid., p. 105.

¹⁴² Benjamin, and Dervin, p. 7.

¹⁴³ Grote, p. 105.

¹⁴⁴ Trojanow, p. 141.

They ask me about my roots, but I am not a tree. Identity is rather something dynamic, a fluid concept, even if many people tend to think only in terms of belonging. At the beginning I suffered from this not belonging of mine. Now I have understood that all this constitutes a richness.¹⁴⁵

As it has been shown, the ‘non-place’ for TCKs can become a powerful and rich location. With their placeless and fluid (like water) identities, TCKs can finally feel at ease in the non-place. Gratification is also reflected in the statement of a TCK, who was interviewed by Tanu as part of her research. The interviewee states, ‘the beauty of being a TCK is that our differences are actually the thing that unites us’.¹⁴⁶ As Ruth Van Reken points out, culture for TCKs ‘may be something defined by shared experience rather than shared nationality or ethnicity’.¹⁴⁷ Although each TCK experience is unique because each TCK has a different background and has travelled to different countries, their shared belonging to a ‘non-place’ brings TCKs together and therefore as we have seen above, Turner’s ‘communitas’ becomes the dynamism that holds the liminal TCK group together.

For individuals who share the experience of frequent international change during childhood, what feels ‘most comforting and secure, most like being at home, is the process of being in transition’.¹⁴⁸ On international waters, always on the move, with crews and passengers from all over the world, boat travels offer the ideal setting for shared TCK experiences and narratives. One must not forget the water on which the boat sails. Like water, the sense of belonging and identities of TCKs can take on several forms. Undeniably, navigation in TCL incorporates metaphors that have been used recurrently in past narratives, from classical to postcolonial texts, such as the ship as microcosm of politics, the concept of journeys into the unknown, and separation from the homeland. Yet, TCL boat travels

¹⁴⁵ Qtd. in Dagnino, *Transcultural Writers*, p. 158.

¹⁴⁶ Tanu, p. 25.

¹⁴⁷ Ruth Van Reken. ‘Third Culture Kids,’ *The Telegraph*, 13 November 2009, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/expateducation/6545869/Third-culture-kids.html>.

¹⁴⁸ Antje Rauwerda. ‘Third Culture Time and Place: Michael Ondaatje’s *The Cat’s Table*.’ *Mosaic: An Interdisciplinary Critical Journal* 49.3 (2016): p. 44.

encompass unique traits too. Because in TCK discourse, feelings of ‘NatioNiLism’ mean that there is no homeland to return to, the TCK ship repeats its liminal navigation over and over again, only to stop occasionally in ‘non-place’ havens. The vessel’s journeys are neither linear nor circular, but divergent and thus unique, extraordinary and rich.

Ultimately, as the TCL novelist Joseph O’Neill points out, boat travels are similar to the encounters of TCKs in international schools. Joined together as children through ‘shared nomadic experiences’,¹⁴⁹ TCKs are mutually afloat in the same boat:

The fact was, I had spent no more than a year of my life in Ireland. As soon after my birth, as they were able to, my parents removed me from Cork and set off on a global journey that took the family to Africa and Asia and finally, when I was six years old, continental Europe. When my father’s project in Rotterdam came to an end in 1975, the family stayed put while he worked in the fjords of Norway, the Borneo jungles and the Arabian deserts, flying back as often as he was able. Aside from a couple of years at the French Lycée in The Hague, I was educated at the British School in The Netherlands, an expensive yet unpretentious day school, where uniforms were worn and the English educational curriculum was followed. The students were mainly the children of diplomats and of scientists and technocrats working for large enterprises like the European Space and Technology Centre, Shell Oil, and Unilever. It was a multinational set-up: I had British, Italian, Gambian, Australian, Portuguese friends. We were all in the same boat, pleasantly adrift from our native land. Necessarily, our relationship with that place was, to a greater or lesser degree, fantastical.¹⁵⁰

Typically, TCKs are at home with navigating from one country and culture to the next. Representing international and liminal hubs for ‘fluid’ identities, where shared hypermobile childhood adventures meet and take on numerous forms in adulthood, the floating ship,¹⁵¹ as the writer O’Neill shows, aptly exemplifies the TCK experience. Skilfully unanchored at sea, this is the unique report of many TCKs.

¹⁴⁹ Meyer, p. 59.

¹⁵⁰ Joseph O’Neill. *Blood-Dark Track*. 2001. London: Harper Perennial, 2009. pp. 242-3.

¹⁵¹ Antje Rauwerda also considers the notion of ‘floating’ when discussing the political and national detachments of TCKs. For her, TCKs float like clouds. See Antje Rauwerda. ‘We are Cumulus: Third Culture as a Cloud’. *thirdcultureliteratureblogspot.de* (August 2015), <https://thirdcultureliterature.blogspot.de/2015/08/we-are-cumulus-third-culture-as-cloud.html>.

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