

HPHP4010 REFRAMING THE WORLD: THE EMERGENCE & SIGNIFICANCE OF GLOBAL HISTORY.



Understanding how history is made has been a primary source of emancipatory insight and practical political consciousness, the great variable container for a critical interpretation of social life and practice. ... however, it may be space more than time that hides consequences from us, the 'making of geography' more than the 'making of history' that provides the most revealing tactical and theoretical world

Edward de Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: the Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory*, London: Verso, 1989.

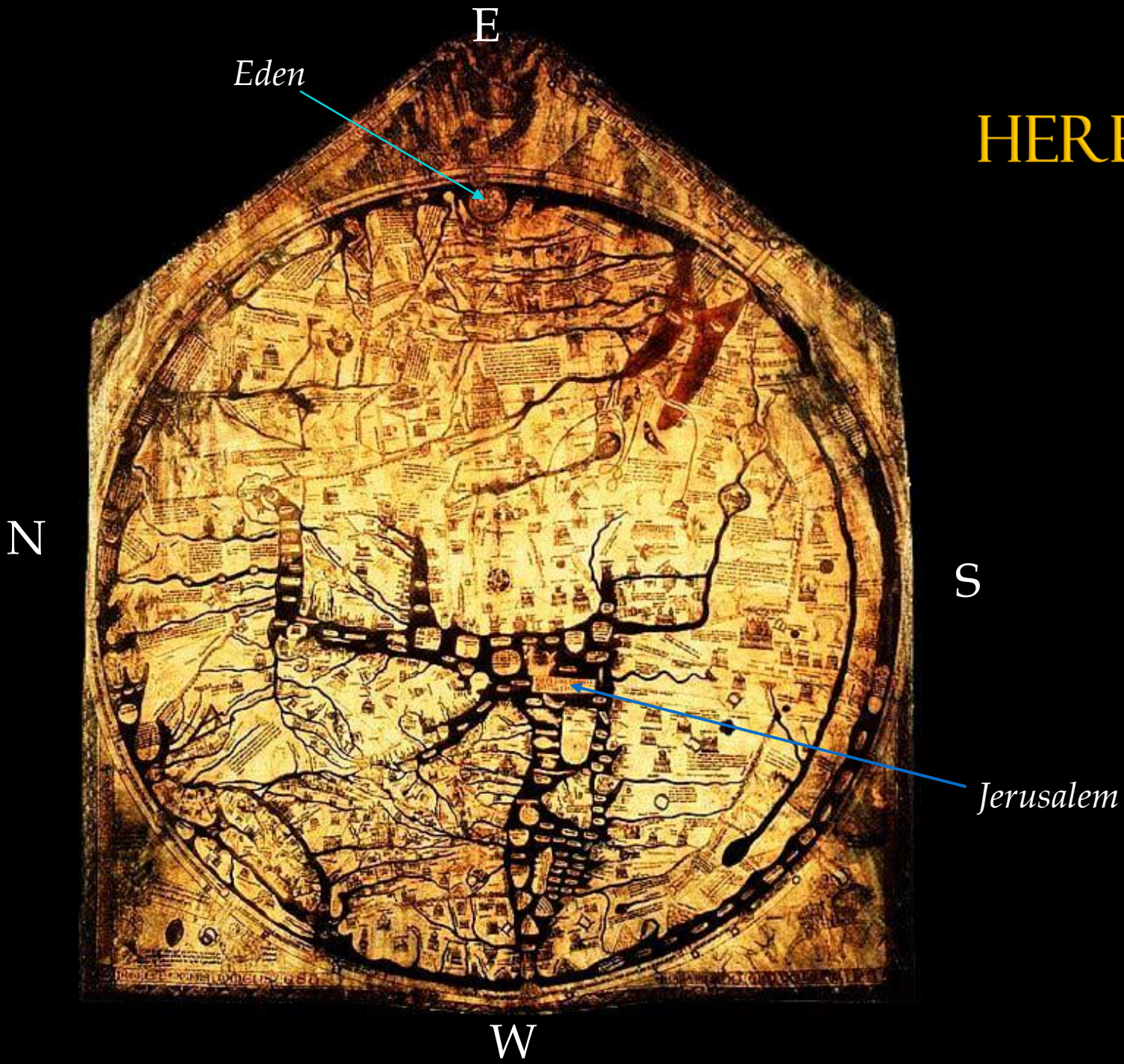
THE BIRTH OF ENGLISH LITERATURE AS A SUBJECT

English was to be taught because, as a Victorian handbook for English teachers put it, it helps to promote sympathy and fellow feeling among all classes. It was thought that it also had the power to elevate the minds of the lower classes. It would communicate to them the moral riches of bourgeois civilisation, impress upon them a reverence for middle-class achievements, and, since reading is an essentially solitary, contemplative activity, curb in them any disruptive tendency to collective political action. Like religion, literature works primarily by emotion and experience, and so was well-fitted to carry through the ideological task of religion. The experience of literature is not only the homeland of ideology, but also in its literary form a kind of vicarious self-fulfilment. If you couldn't experience living on a vast estate with a house full of servants, you could at least read about it.

It is for all these reasons that English as an academic subject was first institutionalised not in the universities, but in the Mechanics' Institutes and working men's colleges. English was literally the poor man's Classics, a way of providing an education for those who would never attend public schools and Oxford or Cambridge. The emphasis within English studies was on solidarity between the social classes, national pride, and moral values. Note that it was the lower classes who were being instructed in class solidarity, and not those at Oxford and Cambridge. This was because it was hoped English would prevent any social unrest.

HEREFORD MAPPA MUNDI

Not about travel or trade but
about the place of power at the
centre and orientation towards
Christ and 'fall' from Eden



LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon the successful completion of this module, the student should be able to:

- Demonstrate a competent and critical understanding of different approaches to global history.
- Demonstrate a comprehension of the different way that academics have engaged with the concept of globalisation and glocalisation. In particular, to be able to respond critically or creatively to various archaeological and historical debates and contributions from the world of literature.

LITERATURE & HISTORY: THEORETICAL /HISTORICAL CONTEXTS

- Enlightenment – reason/ self determination (space hidden)
- Modes of writing: the **novel** as enlightenment form;
 - Narratives of individual development and success from dependency to independency
- Nation state – colonial system
- Orientalism (Edward Said): the de-rationalising of colonial subjects & their histories
- 'English' literature
 - a) Denigration of culture in India – Lord Macaulay
 - b) 'Lack of any culture in Caribbean' – James Froude

Language

- Standardisation and nation state – use of **English** means focus on postcolonial
- Promotion of dominant language and literature (Wales; India, African countries, Caribbean)

Issues

- The **short story** haunts the edges of the novel and its assumption of the nation state especially its association with the marginalised or oppressed group
- Use of English: **Cultural appropriation or cultural oppression?**

THE NOVEL & THE ENLIGHTENMENT

There are still no wholly satisfactory answers to many of the general questions which anyone interested in the early eighteenth-century novelists and their works is likely to ask: Is the novel a new literary form? And if we assume, as is commonly done, that it is, and that it was begun by Defoe, Richardson and Fielding, how does it differ from the prose fiction of the past, from that of Greece, for example, or that of the Middle Ages, or of seventeenth-century France? And is there any reason why these differences appeared when and where they did?

Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel*, 1957 p.3.

The "new" novel of the earlier eighteenth century may be described an institution of the Enlightenment [it partook] in what Webster's dictionary calls "a philosophic movement ... marked by questioning of traditional doctrines and values, a tendency toward individualism, and an emphasis on the idea of universal human progress, the empirical method in science, and the free use of reason" [and] operated within the Enlightenment model of critical communication.

John Bender, 'Enlightenment Fiction and the Scientific Hypothesis', *Representations* Vol. 60 (Winter 1997): 1-23

THE NOVEL – PROPERTY, SELF DETERMINATION & WOMEN AS COMMODITIES

About thirty years ago Miss Maria Ward, of Huntingdon, with only seven thousand pounds, had the good luck to captivate Sir Thomas Bertram, of Mansfield Park, in the county of Northampton, and to be thereby raised to the rank of a baronet's lady, with all the comforts and consequences of an handsome house and large income. All Huntingdon exclaimed on the greatness of the match, and her uncle, the lawyer, himself, allowed her to be at least three thousand pounds short of any equitable claim to it. She had two sisters to be benefited by her elevation; and such of their acquaintance as thought Miss Ward and Miss Frances quite as handsome as Miss Maria, did not scruple to predict their marrying with almost equal advantage. But there certainly are not so many men of large fortune in the world as there are pretty women to deserve them. Miss Ward, at the end of half a dozen years, found herself obliged to be attached to the Rev. Mr. Norris, a friend of her brother-in-law, with scarcely any private fortune ... Miss Frances married, in the common phrase, to disoblige her family, and by fixing on a lieutenant of marines, without education, fortune, or connexions, did it very thoroughly. She could hardly have made a more untoward choice. To save herself from useless remonstrance, Mrs. Price never wrote to her family on the subject till actually married. Lady Bertram, who was a woman of very tranquil feelings, and a temper remarkably easy and indolent, would have contented herself with merely giving up her sister, and thinking no more of the matter; but Mrs. Norris had a spirit of activity, which could not be satisfied till she had written a long and angry letter to Fanny, to point out the folly of her conduct...

Jane Austen, Mansfield Park, 1814

THE NOVEL & THE NEW: INDIVIDUAL PLOTS TO MIRROR THE SELF-DETERMINING INDIVIDUAL

Defoe and Richardson are the first great writers in our literature who did not take plots from mythology, history, legend or previous literature. In this they differ from Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare and Milton, for instance, who, like the writers of Greece and Rome, habitually used traditional plots; and who did so, in the last analysis, because they accepted the general premise of their times ...

After Defoe, Richardson and Fielding in their very different ways continued what was to become the novel's usual practice, the use of non-traditional plots, either wholly invented or based in part on a contemporary incident. . . .

Ian Watt (1957) *The Rise of the Novel* (Chatto 1963) pp.14-15

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NATION STATE (1)

"In an anthropological spirit, then, I propose the following definition of the nation: it is an imagined political community - and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign.

It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion. ... [...]

It is imagined as sovereign because the concept was born in an age in which Enlightenment and Revolution were destroying the legitimacy of the divinely-ordained, hierarchical dynastic realm. Coming to maturity at a stage of human history when even the most devout adherents of any universal religion were inescapably confronted with the living pluralism of such religions, and the allomorphism between each faith's ontological claims and territorial stretch, nations dream of being free, and, if under God, directly so. **The gage and emblem of this freedom is the sovereign state.**

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NATION STATE (2)

"regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship. Ultimately it is this fraternity that makes it possible, over the past two centuries, for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imaginings.

"These deaths bring us abruptly face to face with the central problem posed by nationalism: what makes the shrunken imaginings of recent history (scarcely more than two centuries) generate such colossal sacrifices? I believe that the beginnings of an answer lie in the cultural roots of nationalism."

Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Rev. Edn ed. London and New York: Verso, 1991, pp. 5-7.

(Nationalism feeding empire cf Spivak – next slide)

‘ENGLISH LITERATURE’: THE EMPIRE OF THE LITERARY DISCIPLINE

It should not be possible to read nineteenth-century British literature without remembering that imperialism, understood as England's social mission, was a crucial part of the cultural representation of England to the English. **The role of literature in the production of cultural representation should not be ignored.** These two obvious "facts" continue to be disregarded in the reading of nineteenth-century British literature. This itself attests to the continuing success of the imperialist project, displaced and dispersed into more modern forms.

If these "facts" were remembered, not only in **the study of British literature but in the study of the literatures of the European colonizing cultures of the great age of imperialism, we would produce a narrative, in literary history, of the "worlding" of what is now called "the Third World."** To consider the Third World as distant cultures, exploited but with rich intact literary heritages waiting to be recovered, interpreted, and curricularized in English translation fosters the emergence of "the Third World" as a signifier that allows us to forget that "worlding," even as it expands the empire of the literary discipline.

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, 'Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism,' *Critical Inquiry* 12:1 (Autumn, 1985) "Race," *Writing, and Difference*

PROPERTY & SLAVERY

1. “Why, you know, Sir Thomas's means will be rather straitened if the Antigua estate is to make such poor returns.”

“Oh! *that* will soon be settled. Sir Thomas has been writing about it, I know.” (Chap 3)

2. Sir Thomas found it expedient to go to Antigua himself, for the better arrangement of his affairs, and he took his eldest son with him, in the hope of detaching him from some bad connexions at home.

3. Sir Thomas, however, was truly happy in the prospect of an alliance so unquestionably advantageous ...It was a connexion exactly of the right sort—in the same county, and the same interest—and his most hearty concurrence was conveyed as soon as possible. He only conditioned that the marriage should not take place before his return, which he was again looking eagerly forward to. He wrote in April, and had strong hopes of settling everything to his entire satisfaction, and leaving Antigua before the end of the summer.

4. His business in Antigua had latterly been prosperously rapid, and he came directly from Liverpool, having had an opportunity of making his passage thither in a private vessel

5. Sir Thomas ... prolonged the conversation on dancing in general, and was so well engaged in describing the balls of Antigua, and listening to what his nephew could relate of the different modes of dancing

Jane Austen *Mansfield Park*, 1814

... the staple diet of Antigua's Africans was “loblolly,” a sort of porridge made from pounded maize—and worked six days a week. Given the heat, ceaseless labor and harsh discipline, it might be thought remarkable that the workers on the plantations did not rise more often than they did. Slaves soon made up the majority of Antiguan population—85 percent by 1736, when there were 24,400 of them on the island. But while sheer weight of numbers made rebellion possible, it also made the planters cautious. They formed militias, drilled regularly, and did what they could to prevent their slaves from congregating at dances and markets where talk might turn to revolt. Fear of rebellion also led to near-hysterical brutality. The least whisper of rebellion could prompt large-scale roundups, trials and executions, for it was clear that any large-scale revolt could only be fatal for the slaves' masters.

CONDITIONS OF SLAVES IN ANTIGUAN SUGAR PLANTATIONS

... It was against this backdrop that the Antiguan slaves found a leader. ... His African name seems to have been Kwaku Takyi. Present-day Antiguans, however, know him as Prince Klaas and consider him a national hero. According to David Barry Gaspar ... Klaas was one of the masterminds behind an elaborate plot, hatched late in 1735, to overthrow white rule on Antigua. The conspiracy allegedly involved slaves on a number of large plantations, and was built around an audacious effort to destroy the island's planters in a single spectacular explosion. Taking advantage of a large ball due to be held in St. John's in October 1736, the slaves planned to smuggle a 10-gallon barrel of gunpowder into the building and blow it up. The detonation was to be the signal for slaves on the surrounding plantations to rise, murder their masters and march on the capital from four directions.



Prince Klaas, leader of the supposed slave rebellion on Antigua, on the wheel. (Wikimedia Commons)

Breaking on the wheel was the most horrific punishment ever visited on a convicted criminal. It was a form of crucifixion, but with several cruel refinements; in its evolved form, a prisoner was strapped, spreadeagled, to a large cartwheel that was placed axle-first in the earth so that it formed a rotating platform a few feet above the ground. The wheel was then slowly rotated while an executioner methodically crushed the bones in the condemned man's body, starting with his fingers and toes and working inexorably inward.

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/antiguas-disputed-slave-conspiracy-of-1736-117569/>

DISCUSSION: LITERATURE & EMPIRE

The names of *Mansfield Park*

- during a Parliamentary investigation, a witness for the slave trade, Robert NORRIS, described how 'delightful' the slave ships were. The enslaved people, he suggested, had sufficient room, sufficient air, and sufficient provisions. When upon deck, they made merry and amused themselves with dancing... In short, the voyage from Africa to the West Indies was one of the happiest periods of their life!' (qutd. http://abolition.e2bn.org/slavery_44.html)
- Lord MANSFIELD decided that: The state of slavery is of such a nature that it is incapable of being introduced on any reasons, moral or political, but only by positive law, which preserves its force long after the reasons, occasions, and time itself from whence it was created, is erased from memory. It is so odious, that nothing can be suffered to support it, but positive law.
- The significance of Fanny's second name: 'PRICE'

Topics for discussion

- Does the history of the sugar plantations in Antigua affect how we read *Mansfield Park* ?
- How do we read a story apparently about property in England in this context?
- Fanny is taken by Mrs Norris from her family in Portsmouth and transported to a big house where she is exploited

THE NOVEL AND THE ENLIGHTENMENT PRINCIPLE OF INDIVIDUATION

The 'principle of individuation' accepted by Locke was that of existence at a particular locus in space and time: since, as he wrote, 'ideas become general by separating from them the circumstances of time and place', so they become particular only when both these circumstances are specified. In the same way the characters of the novel can only be individualized if they are set in a background of particularized time and place. . . .

many novelists, from Sterne to Proust, have made their subject the exploration of personality as it is defined in the interpretation of its past and present self-awareness... the novel in general has interested itself much more than any other literary form in the development of its characters in the course of time.

Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel*, 1957 p. 21

This 'principle of individuation' is consistently denied the colonial subject

ORIENTALISM

- from 1815 to 1914 European direct colonial dominion expanded from about 35 percent of the Earth's surface to about 85 percent of it.
- so far as the West was concerned during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, an assumption had been made that the Orient and everything in it was, if not patently inferior to, then in need of corrective study by the West. The Orient was viewed as if framed by the classroom, the criminal court, the prison, the illustrated manual. Orientalism, then, is knowledge of the Orient that places things Oriental in class, court, prison, or manual for scrutiny, judgment, discipline, or governing.

(Edward Said, *Orientalism* pp.40-41)

THE CARIBBEAN: AN INADEQUATE & IRRATIONAL SPACE

Roses do not grow on thorn trees, nor figs on thistles. A healthy human civilisation was not perhaps to be looked for in countries which have been alternately the prey of avarice, ambition, and sentimentalism. We visit foreign countries to see varieties of life and character, to learn languages that we may gain an insight into various literatures, to see manners unlike our own springing naturally out of different soils and climates, to see beautiful works of art, to see places associated with great men and great actions, and subsidiary to these, to see lakes and mountains, and strange skies and seas. But the localities of great events and the homes of the actors in them are only saddening when the spiritual results are disappointing, and scenery loses its charm unless the grace of humanity is in the heart of it. To the man of science the West Indies may be delightful and instructive. Rocks and trees and flowers remain as they always were, and Nature is constant to herself. But the traveller whose heart is with his kind, and who cares only to see his brother mortals making their corner of this planet into an orderly and rational home, had better choose some other object for his pilgrimage.

James Anthony Froude, *The English in the West Indies or, The Bow of Ulysses*, 1888; p.307

MINUTE ON INDIAN EDUCATION T. B. MACAULAY, 2 FEB 1835

[10] I have no knowledge of either Sanscrit or Arabic. But I have done what I could to form a correct estimate of their value. I have read translations of the most celebrated Arabic and Sanscrit works. I have conversed, both here and at home, with men distinguished by their proficiency in the Eastern tongues. I am quite ready to take the oriental learning at the valuation of the orientalists themselves. I have never found one among them who could deny that a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia. The intrinsic superiority of the Western literature is indeed fully admitted by those members of the committee who support the oriental plan of education.

[11] It will hardly be disputed, I suppose, that the department of literature in which the Eastern writers stand highest is poetry. And I certainly never met with any orientalist who ventured to maintain that the Arabic and Sanscrit poetry could be compared to that of the great European nations. But when we pass from works of imagination to works in which facts are recorded and general principles investigated, the superiority of the Europeans becomes absolutely immeasurable. It is, I believe, no exaggeration to say that all the historical information which has been collected from all the books written in the Sanscrit language is less valuable than what may be found in the most paltry abridgments used at preparatory schools in England. In every branch of physical or moral philosophy, the relative position of the two nations is nearly the same.

MINUTE ON EDUCATION 1835

We must do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons, Indians in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellect.

Lord Macaulay

(The classic reason for teaching English, but only to a small minority who can be co-opted)

A FAR CRY FROM AFRICA

A wind is ruffling the tawny pelt
Of Africa. Kikuyu, quick as flies,
Batten upon the bloodstreams of the veldt.
Corpses are scattered through a paradise.
Only the worm, colonel of carrion, cries:
"Waste no compassion on these separate dead!"
Statistics justify and scholars seize
The salients of colonial policy.
What is that to the white child hacked in bed?
To savages, expendable as Jews?

Threshed out by beaters, the long rushes break
In a white dust of ibises whose cries
Have wheeled since civilization's dawn
From the parched river or beast-teeming plain.
The violence of beast on beast is read
As natural law, but upright man
Seeks his divinity by inflicting pain.

Delirious as these worried beasts, his wars
Dance to the tightened carcass of a drum,
While he calls courage still that native dread
Of the white peace contracted by the dead.

Again brutish necessity wipes its hands
Upon the napkin of a dirty cause, again
A waste of our compassion, as with Spain,
The gorilla wrestles with the superman.
I who am poisoned with the blood of both,
Where shall I turn, divided to the vein?
I who have cursed
The drunken officer of British rule, how choose
Between this Africa and the English tongue I
love?
Betray them both, or give back what they give?
How can I face such slaughter and be cool?
How can I turn from Africa and live?

Derek Walcott (1930-2017)

DISCUSSION

As far as we were concerned the whole business of the Voyage began when we were invited to report to a certain place by a certain time. That was the first we heard of the scheme. We didn't know anything of the political background. God's wrath with his own creation was news to us; we just got caught up in it willy-nilly. We weren't in any way to blame (you don't really believe that story about the serpent, do you?), and yet the consequences for us were equally severe: every species wiped out except for a single breeding pair, and that couple consigned to the high seas under the charge of an old rogue with a drink problem who was already into his seventh century of life.

ALTERNATIVE HISTORIES OF THE WORLD

So the word went out; but characteristically they didn't tell us the truth. Did you imagine that in the vicinity of Noah's palace (oh, he wasn't poor, that Noah) there dwelt a convenient example of every species on earth? Come, come. No, they were obliged to advertise, and then select the best pair that presented itself. Since they didn't want to cause a universal panic, they announced a competition for twosomes – a sort of beauty contest – and told contestants to present themselves at Noah's gate by a certain month. You can imagine the problems. For a start, not everyone has a competitive nature, so perhaps only the grabbiest turned up. Animals who weren't smart enough to read between the lines felt they simply didn't need to win a luxury cruise for two, all expenses paid, thank you very much. Nor had Noah and his staff allowed for the fact that some species hibernate at a given time of year; let alone the more obvious fact that certain animals travel more slowly than others. There was a particularly relaxed sloth, for instance – an exquisite creature, I can vouch for it personally – which had scarcely got down to the foot of its tree before it was wiped out in the great wash of God's vengeance. What do you call that – natural selection? I'd call it professional incompetence.

Julian Barnes, *A History of the World in 10½ Chapters*, 1989

'where do we see it from is the question'