

## Selected Papers of International Conference on the Aesthetic Mechanisms of Ocean Representations in British, American, and Asian Contexts, 13–14 July 2019

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The oceans—most typically the Pacific Ocean—have long served as a variety of aesthetic inspiration to poets, novelists, and film-directors, thereby producing a great number of literary and film representations. Alternatively, we must regard the oceans as geopolitical spaces where numerous conflicts of interest exist amongst nation-states or ethnic groups as well as a space that mercilessly highlights the helplessness and powerlessness of human beings in the face of natural forces. Accordingly, we may wonder whether the severe and harsh realities of the sea—both geopolitical and natural—have obliged or driven us to aesthetically sublimate them in a variety of ways.

The objective of this international conference was to conduct cross-regional examinations of the ways in which such an aesthetic mechanism functions to produce ocean representations in what might be termed symbolic and imaginary compensation. Thus, this meeting attempted to re-politicise and historicise the aesthetics of the sea in literature and films from this theoretical point of view.

Historically, this two-day conference was designed to cover ocean representations from the medieval periods through the early modern ages until the contemporary era. English travel writings were examined in these historical contexts. At the same time, our interest was also grounded in the geopolitical and aesthetic significances of Japan and America in this vein, leading us to re-examine the representations of Japan in American contexts and those of America in Japanese ones, with particular reference to the Pacific Ocean. Thus, this cross-regional study allowed us to obtain a synthesised and comprehensive viewpoint from which to consider this aesthetic mechanism, a symbolic sublimation of various realities related to human experiences of the oceans.

The following three articles have been selected as representative of the three crucial geographical regions in the conference: America, Japan, and Britain. For summaries of all the presentations delivered at this meeting, please visit here: <https://www.seikei.ac.jp/university/caps/assets/docs/newsletter/no144.pdf>.