



Before *Frankenstein*: Therese Huber and the Antipodean Emergence of Political Fiction

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ABSTRACT

Therese Huber's *Abentheuer auf einer Reise nach Neu-Holland* (1793–94) was the first European novel to be set in the Antipodes, emerging directly out of post-revolutionary German romanticism. It ventriloquises the voice of Huber's estranged husband, Georg Forster, a revolutionary, naturalist and Pacific voyager, to tell the story of Forster's return to Australia, and thence to imagine a mode of liberation centred on family and community rather than the nation-state or cosmopolitan politics. The newly established penal colony is constructed as a *terra nullius* in which 'love and humanity' as well as sacrifice can replace the old hierarchical social order. This essay explores unnoticed connections between Huber's European and female-orientated colonialist fantasy of Australian emptiness and the emerging genre of the political novel in Britain, as spearheaded by William Godwin and his circle and as later developed in Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818). It does so in order to acknowledge and affirm Huber's neglected German-language contribution to the early Australian literary archive and to extend our understanding of the global dynamics that underpinned emerging eighteenth-century literary forms.

KEYWORDS

South Pacific; settler colonialism; Therese Huber; *Frankenstein*; political fiction

The impact of early South Pacific encounters and voyage literature on the development of European romanticism has long been acknowledged. We know that the first wave of eighteenth-century European engagement with the South Seas expressed itself in tropes of wonder and curiosity common among early modern speculations about the austral unknown while also mobilising enlightened science and systems of empire.¹ Once the Botany Bay penal colony was established in 1788, however, and then in the aftermath of the French Revolution, the South Pacific was increasingly imagined as a place of settlement (understood in Australia's case as an occupation of *terra nullius*).² As such, it also became a site of a new kind of European global imaginary, one dedicated to the reconstitution of social order.

Amongst the most important of the early fictions marking the post-revolutionary turn is Therese Huber's *Abentheuer auf einer Reise nach Neu-Holland* [*Adventures on a Voyage to New Holland*, 1793–94]. The first novel set in the new Australian penal colony, it emerged directly out of German romanticism. Huber's novel ventriloquised the voice of

her estranged husband, Georg Forster, the famous naturalist and Pacific voyager, to tell a story of his return to Australia in the wake of revolutionary failure in Europe. In addition to reimagining the (by-then dead) Forster as a melancholic Antipodean wanderer, it placed an ex-convict woman at the centre of a complex and equivocal settler vision based on love, family and community. Huber herself never visited Australia. Rather, her female-orientated colonialist fantasy joins a long history of colonial projection that Barbara Zantop recognises as a pre-formation of modern German nationalism.³ In literary historical terms, however, the *Abentheuer* is unique both as a Pacific-based narrative of sensibility-cum-post-revolutionary ennui and as an unlikely prefiguration of an emergent mode of British political fiction that would spawn, most famously, Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818).

This essay draws upon and extends the very small archive of existing scholarship on the *Abentheuer* to explore unnoticed connections between Huber's text and two key novels of the Anglophone romantic tradition – William Godwin's *Caleb Williams* (1794) and Shelley's *Frankenstein*. It does so with two ends in view. First, to acknowledge and affirm Huber's neglected German-language contribution to the early Australian literary archive, broadly conceived. And second, to extend our understanding of the global dynamics that underpinned emerging eighteenth-century literary forms.⁴ Importantly, Huber's text illuminates how these dynamics cut both ways, revealing the worldly stakes of early Australian settler fiction, on the one hand, and the distant imaginary projections that fuelled European post-revolutionary literature and politics on the other.

Therese Huber (1764–1829) was born into a centre of European progressive modernity. Her father, Christian Gottlob Heyne, was a famous professor of philology at Universität Göttingen, which had been established relatively recently in 1737 by Britain's George II in his office as Elector of Hanover. Göttingen, which in terms of student numbers quickly became the largest university in Europe, was at the cutting edge of eighteenth-century university modernisation. As William Clark notes in his *Academic Charisma and the Origins of the Research University*, Göttingen was where publication was first counted for promotion and academic staff dossiers were first assembled.⁵ Heyne more or less invented the modern research seminar and was responsible for building up a university library (then the largest in Europe) in the mode that we know today. It was also a politically progressive university: thus, for instance, a Göttingen graduate, the medical researcher and inventor, Samuel Thomas von Sömmerring, wrote one of the first explicitly anti-racist books, *Über die körperliche Verschiedenheit des Mohren vom Europäer* (1774), which he dedicated to Huber's husband to be, Georg Forster, and which refuted the notion that coloured races were somehow anatomically or physiologically inferior to whites. And although women could not attend the university, academics' daughters were encouraged to join the world of progressive scholarship and thought. Therese Huber and Caroline Schelling belonged to a group of professors' daughters known as the *Universitätsmamsellen*, which included Dorothea Schlözer, who overcame the ban on female students to become the first woman ever to receive a doctorate in philosophy.⁶

At the age of twenty-one (in 1785), Huber married Forster, the German-born, English-educated naturalist and writer ten years her senior, whom, as a young man, had become famous across Europe after accompanying his father, Johann Reinhold Forster, on Cook's

second voyage. After Forster's death in 1793 left her in debt, Huber turned to journalism and fiction writing, producing six novels and more than sixty stories, including a revolutionary novel, *Die Familie Seldorf* (1795–96), which remains her most remembered work.⁷ Well-known to German literary historians, Huber's fiction is strikingly under-read in the broader scholarship of British and European romanticism and colonialism.⁸ Existing Anglophone commentary on the *Abentheuer*, mostly generated by Australian-based Germanists and Forster scholars, has had little or no uptake in discussions of early Australian settler fiction, for instance.⁹ This situation stands in need of correction even if most of Huber's work remains unavailable in English, unlike the *Abentheuer* itself, which was translated by George Livingstone for Leslie Bodi's 1966 Australian edition of the text.¹⁰

To be sure, Huber stands as a compelling European counterpart to Anglophone women writers of the 1790s such as Mary Wollstonecraft, Mary Robinson and Elizabeth Inchbald, all of whom she read, and whose commitment both to the fiction of sensibility and to a burgeoning concept of women's rights she extended to the South Seas.¹¹ The *Abentheuer*, an epistolary novel published under her second husband Ludwig Huber's name and serialised in the German women's magazine *Flora* in 1793–94, was her first effort at fiction.¹² It channelled Forster's voice so as to recast his life and death in global terms. Drawing on his letters and travel writing, it returned him to a fictional New Holland, but one that had been transformed by a distinctly feminised settler ethic, and in that way stands against the forces of counter-revolution in Britain and Europe.

Georg Forster was a towering figure of enlightened progressivism whose own account of Cook's voyage, *A Voyage Round the World* (1777) was widely celebrated for its freshness and modernity.¹³ Prominent in German intellectual circles (debating with Kant and others), Forster was an outspoken critic of the French *ancien régime*. He wrote a preface to the German edition of Thomas Paine's *Rights of Man* (1792) and mixed with Paine, Wollstonecraft and other radicals in France.¹⁴ In his essay on the emergence of the modern concept of emancipation, historian Reinhard Koselleck argues that Forster was the first person to 'subsume the Kantian philosophy of history' into a project of general human emancipation.¹⁵ We can add that for Forster, in particular, the project of liberation was global. In 'Cook der Entdecker', published in 1787, just a year after his endorsement of the proposal to establish a new British penal colony at Botany Bay, he celebrated Cook's voyages as the dawn of a new age for 'the ... advance of our whole kind towards a certain goal of perfection', giving South Seas utopianism a radical inflection for the first time.¹⁶

In the immediate aftermath of the French revolution, Forster and his circle enacted emancipation in their everyday lives. After Huber and Forster's troubled marriage had come undone, they lived openly in a *ménage à trois* with journalist Ludwig Huber. In progressive terms, their lives were widely regarded as being located at a cutting edge where the politics of liberation, the ethics of sensibility and advanced secular knowledge intersected. After France's victory over the German army in 1792, Therese and Ludwig fled to Switzerland with her children, while Forster became one of the Rhineland's revolutionary leaders. He arrived in Paris during the Terror, to represent the Mainz republic at the capital of liberation. Following the Prussian reclamation of the territory, however, he was condemned by the Jacobins and denounced as a traitor in Germany. Forsaken by his allies and cut adrift from his family, Forster died a pauper's death in Paris in January 1794.

Taking Forster's end-of-life isolation and disgrace as its point of departure, Huber's *Abentheuer* tells the story of Rudolph, an erstwhile revolutionary in flight from the

Terror, who in his political disappointment travels to the Botany Bay colony en route to China and India. His opening letter, addressed to Reinette and Berthold (the fictional Therese and Ludwig Huber), his only remaining 'friends in Germany', explains his act of *Weltflucht* in these terms:

No, my friends, I repeat: your tender sensibilities lead you astray if you number this journey among my misfortunes. The opportunity to leave * * * is a proof that Fortune is smiling on me once more; the first step towards restoring me to all of you and to myself is to flee from the Europe that now rejects me and to seek security and peace in a pure and youthful land where Nature shall redeem the dregs of degenerate race. Misled by false theorising what incredible actions did I not perform in the cause of Freedom: heedless of the scenes of misery, hatred and baseness which sprang up around me and which I myself helped to create I marched on bravely and steadfastly towards a future that was to improve and reward mankind.¹⁷

Misled by 'false theorising' (and equally wary of 'tender sensibilities'), Rudolph wishes to be restored to 'Nature' and 'reconcile[d] ... to mankind once more', as he later puts it.¹⁸ Posed in these melancholic terms, his journey retains little of the expansive optimism of the two Forsters' earlier Pacific adventure. While perhaps traces of the elder Forster's sentimentalism are apparent, nothing remains of Georg Forster's overweening conception of 'the general enlightenment of all civilized peoples'.¹⁹

That Huber's text belongs to quite another historical moment is clear when Rudolph figures himself as an abject outsider, a 'citizen of the world, rejected by every well-ordered community'.²⁰ Undertaking his journey on a convict ship, he poses as a poor English free-settler, remarking ironically on his secret kinship with the prisoners: 'I cannot but laugh to think that I am being most readily conveyed for money to a place whither, were I but known, I would perhaps be transported *gratis*, and most rudely into the bargain'.²¹ On board the ship, the truth of European society is revealed as a story of systemic injustice, criminalisation and oppression. It is nonetheless a society whose transportation to the Antipodean *terra nullius* offers some possibility of social redemption, if not the salvation of Rudolph himself.

That possibility unfolds as an inset story about a young English widow, Frances Belton, whom Rudolph befriends, and who has been convicted for theft and implicated in the murder of an abusive fellow servant. At the novel's beginning, she is held beneath deck in the transport ship with her young daughter, Betty, before acting heroically to save an unwanted newborn (later named Clara) from the murderous intentions of its mother, a 'wretched prostitute'.²² The child's rescue and subsequent care under Frances's guardianship is one of a series of sentimental tableaux that structure the *Abenthueur* as a narrative of global sensibility. Each 'touching moment', which 'overwhelm[s]' Rudolph with 'emotion', works incrementally to rouse him from despair.²³ In this way his journey unfolds as a staged itinerary of emotion as stirred by his recollection of a delicate rose bush by the Rhine; by the moving sight of an 'honest Hottentot' family on the South African Cape; and finally, by witnessing the happy reunion of Frances with her husband, Henry Belton, on Norfolk Island.²⁴

Upon arrival at Sydney Cove, however, Rudolph observes that the penal colony, once a 'natural paradise', is now disfigured by 'a lamentable race of men' with 'no motive for virtue'.²⁵ As Judith Wilson has observed, these remarks amount to a pointed rebuttal of Forster's own expectation of its capacity for rehabilitation and renewal.²⁶ Huber's

narrative suggests, rather, that it is only upon their release that a handful of 'the best' felons (including Frances's husband, separated from her after leading a failed coalminers' rebellion in Wales), are able to redeem themselves through active labour and land ownership.²⁷ This is precisely the kind of argument for civilisation and settlement that will later be developed by colonial theorists such as E. G. Wakefield. In the culmination of Frances's story, however, Huber tentatively imagines another kind of settler ethic that takes a distinctly female form. When Frances is reunited, quite by coincidence, with her husband on Norfolk Island, she at last fully explains her own crime as one of honourable self-defence. Freed from the shame of infamy, the ameliorative emotional effects of domestic sentiment – love, honesty, belonging, compassion and affection – take their course and her story ends in the happy reconstitution of her extended family among a community of ex-felons and freethinkers. In this context, the rescued baby Clara emerges as a symbol of new life and hope in the fledgling colony, as aspired to but not achieved by the still-restless Rudolph who observes that '[t]he creature looks as if she felt Love and Humanity are the only bonds that join her to society'.²⁸

Arguably Frances Belton's female-convict-cum-settler story speaks not just to Huber's embrace of a reconstructed, colonial form of domestic sentimentalism but to her attempt to appeal to the new female readerships that sustained commercial women's magazines like *Flora*.²⁹ In this regard, Huber's attempt to fashion a post-revolutionary Pacific settler vision stands against the wave of political reaction that condemned Forster and other revolutionary enthusiasts while also tempering the vaulting worldly (and distinctly male) ambition of the progressive cause. If Huber began her fiction-writing career ventriloquising her ex-husband, she soon found her way to embracing women's stories of family, love and affect as the basis of her own fictional trajectory, which never again repeated the blend of utopian Pacific projection and domestic fiction that characterised the *Abentheuer*.

It is no coincidence that the narrative's vision of a new social order based upon familial bonds and settler community unfolds not in New South Wales itself but on Norfolk Island. This is yet another way in which Huber both recalls and distances herself from Forster's ghost. Forster was present when Cook took possession of Norfolk Island in 1774 and in his *Voyage* he had singled it out as a location of particular beauty and potential.³⁰ Huber only equivocally reproduces his enthusiasm, however, when Rudolph writes upon his arrival:

What strange scenes have I to witness in this distant unknown corner of the earth! Can it really be true, my dear ones? Do certain people really have second sight by which they perceive the marvellous ways of Destiny, just as our nurses claim that children born on a Sunday can see spirits?³¹

Rudolph's earnestness has given way to a lighter, more whimsical tone, which underscores Norfolk Island's status as a magical and unreal setting. It is hard to miss Huber's irony here since the island's strangeness and distance can be understood both to amplify and to cast doubt upon the feminised settler vision it offers.

By contrast, the New South Wales penal colony's core function for Huber is to provide a concrete setting for a distanced yet passionate moral reckoning with the aftermath of revolution from the point of view of its broken and defeated male participants. Henry Belton, like Rudolph, is figured sympathetically as a 'noble idealist', now burdened with a 'mutilated' heart.³² In what amounts to a soft renunciation of rebellion, Rudolph/Forster explains to Henry the 'honourableness of error', as he puts it – that their resistance to

tyranny led them to commit acts of violence that were rightly punished by law in their respective homelands ('politically and historically you were in the wrong', he says) while nonetheless continuing to affirm liberation more generally.³³ Once an accommodation between 'good conscience' and the rule of law is agreed between the two men as the basis of life in the *terra nullius*, Henry can be (miraculously) reunited with Frances and a new social order can be imagined on the basis of their mutual redemption. Rudolph himself, however, continues to wander, headed towards death.³⁴

Indeed, Rudolph's fate underscores the degree to which Huber's *Abentheuer* is ordered by a revolutionary melancholy that limits its redemptive ambitions. It is as if the failure of the French revolution to reconstitute Europe has detached the ethics of sensibility from the politics of liberation or indeed any larger social project, sealing it into a remote and privatised domestic scene. The South Sea settler colony here is pictured neither as a revitalised organic society nor a place where reason and justice reign, nor as one where sentimental relations spontaneously extend themselves, but as where the shards of a rotten society may, at least occasionally, germinate scattered familial love and solidarity under the rule of law.³⁵ And perhaps most strikingly, Rudolph, the alienated intellectual whose romantic commitments to passion, freedom and progress have come undone, anticipates later romantic literary wanderers like Byron's Childe Harold, Mary Shelley's Lionel Verney, the protagonist of *The Last Man* (1826), and indeed, Victor Frankenstein and his creature.

To be sure, Rudolph's fictional recapitulation of Forster's *Voyage* is a global journey of despair punctuated by moments of intense sensibility. That he hovers listlessly between exile and death is confirmed by 'The Lonely Deathbed' (*Das einsame Todbett*), the 'post-script to, and explanation of *Abentheuer*, which Huber completed a decade later, with a preface that confirmed the identity of her hero as Forster.'³⁶ In this text, Rudolph/Forster again lives on, having departed the Botany Bay colony for the 'primeval world' of Asia (as Forster's own last letters to Huber, which she drew upon almost verbatim, suggest he intended), where he hopes to be bound 'once again to humanity'.³⁷ There amongst 'simple people of the Ganges' and the 'ruins of the ancient world' Rudolph's *wanderlust* finally abates upon witnessing an Indian man, old and 'blind', receiving a simple meal of dates and rice from his family.³⁸ Returning to Europe to seek out his own wife and daughter, Rudolph dies alone in Berg, unaware that his family is close by and that the doctor who attends him is his own future son-in-law.

The melancholy of Huber's Pacific settler vision is largely enabled by the double narrative structure of the *Abentheuer*, which, as we have seen, presents two post-revolutionary trajectories: the Belton family's penal-cum-settler narrative framed by that of Forster/Rudolph, the world-weary, cosmopolitan wanderer in flight from the collapse of Europe's revolutions. Arguably too, that double structure allows Huber's novel to straddle two important emergent forms of fiction: the novel of sensibility and the political novel. Frances's inset narrative of transportation to the penal colony shares much with its near Anglophone contemporary, William Godwin's *Caleb Williams* (1794), which sought to amplify the message of his radical tract, *An Enquiry into Political Justice* (1793) and which we know Huber read.³⁹ As a servant falsely accused of theft, Frances is a kind of female Caleb (although she is unrepentant for the murder she has committed in defence of her virtue); on one occasion false charges against her are dropped in a courtroom scene in which her truth-telling – her 'clear and convincing' answers – have a

transformative effect on the court's officials, as does Caleb's exposé of Mr Falkland's crimes in the final scene of Godwin's narrative.⁴⁰ Henry Belton, too, shares many of Caleb's circumstances – a bright boy of poor family, selected to serve as private secretary to a local nobleman [the Duke of ***] who later rebels and falls foul of the world that has elevated him. Most strikingly, the blank finality and solitude of Caleb's anticipated death in the original manuscript ending of Godwin's novel, in which he renders himself as a 'GRAVE-STONE! – an obelisk', shares much with Rudolph's end in Huber's *The Lonely Death Bed*, which tells us, plainly enough, 'He sank alone into the grave'.⁴¹

These intertextual connections and resemblances might be not much more than coincidental were it not for a striking set of affinities between the *Abentheuer's* Forster-focused frame narrative and the structures and settings of Mary Shelley's own recasting of *Caleb Williams* (and her father's legacy) in *Frankenstein* (1818) – like the *Abentheuer*, a first fictional effort. It is more than likely that Shelley read, or at the very least was familiar with, Forster's *Voyage*, but unlikely, or near impossible, that she had read Huber's *Abentheuer*.⁴² The influence of the former is evident in the Arctic episodes of *Frankenstein* (Walton, an adventurer/explorer, writes letters home from the Arctic zone where Victor pursues the creature), which, like P. B. Shelley's 'Mont Blanc' (1817), arguably carries echoes of Forster's famous account of his Antarctic adventures on Cook's second voyage.⁴³ But it is Huber's framing narrative as it pits the moral value and simplicity of family life against worldly forms of knowledge, power and ambition that resonates most in the context of Mary Shelley's own post-Promethean narrative. It is as if Huber and Shelley joined hands unknowingly in fictionally responding to the Ur-texts of their immediate male predecessors.⁴⁴

Let me point briefly to one passage in the *Abentheuer*, whose lineaments are amplified and extended in Shelley's text. As Rudolph departs Europe and rounds the Cape on his return voyage to New Holland, and after having been locked in his cabin for four weeks learning Arabic (which he tellingly describes as 'an heroic but stupid and stupefying enterprise'⁴⁵), he reflects on the simplicities of Hottentot life as he saw them once as an ambitious young man and now, again, in the act of 'Weltflucht' seeking a new moral existence, or connection to humankind:

The Cape! *The Cape again after nineteen years!* ... I was very young when I saw the Cape for the first time. My mind at that time was bursting with great plans ... And if I then pictured to myself the highest reward for all the danger I underwent, it was the honest Hottentot that appeared before my envious eyes as he left his hut to fetch fruits in a basket of woven reeds and milk in a jug for his wife and child. What you are looking for, he already possesses and you can have what he has without roving from the one Pole to the other and without wasting years in the attempt to confirm that this, after all, is the best. ...

I chose otherwise, dear friends. I joined a ship and roamed far and wide for the best years of my life. Now once again I stand on the same spot, the hut stands where it did before, the palm trees give it fairer shade than ever. The boy I see playing before me in the sunshine is perhaps the son of that other one, the blooming young woman who is coming from the forest with a basket on her head is perhaps his wife ... And I—I am here again, just as I was nineteen years ago, with neither hut nor wife nor child, a citizen of the world, rejected by every well-ordered community ...⁴⁶

It is important to note that the witnessing of this family scene – a Hottentot tableau – has no equivalent in Forster's journey (and no equivalent in the account of Anders Sparrman,

either, who published a cognate account of Cook's second voyage with an extensive coverage of the Cape and the customs and manners of the Hottentot).⁴⁷ Judith Wilson has rightly noted that this is a scene in which Huber critically engages with and revises Forster's negative views on Rousseau and primitivism by positioning the Hottentot as the 'noble savage' (in what was a direct rebuttal of Lessing, for instance), but we can leave that point aside in this context and simply note that Huber's scene of the wanderer looking on at the Hottentot family, unprecedented in the source/voyage literature, has the status of a deliberate insertion, an intervention that rectifies an implied omission in those sources and that underscores the centrality of domesticity to her understanding of post-revolutionary social order.⁴⁸

So to *Frankenstein*. It turns out that the heart of Shelley's text, the creature's story, presents a very similar scenario: after fleeing Victor's laboratory, the creature awakens in a forest, having taken shelter in a hovel adjacent to a cottage.⁴⁹ He goes on to observe unseen the 'gentle manners' of the cottagers, the De Lacey's, an 'amiable family', from whom he goes on to learn everything he knows about human life and community (language, reading, thought), and forms a desire to emulate it.⁵⁰ The description (like Rudolph's) readily modulates from ethnographic observation to discursive commentary, beginning thus: 'The cottagers arose the next morning before the sun. The young woman arranged the cottage, and prepared the food; and the youth departed after the first meal'.⁵¹

Like Huber, Shelley has her observer reflect upon his outsider status in light of what he sees:

Every conversation of the cottagers now opened new wonders to me ... the strange system of human society was explained to me. And what was I? ... I saw and heard none like me. Was I then a monster, a blot upon the earth, from which all men fled, and whom all men disowned?⁵²

And, of course, when the De Lacey's spurn him he burns down their cottage and undertakes a murderous rampage, only to fulfil his monstrous destiny to be 'shunned and hated by all mankind' – which is a hyperbolic, Gothicised iteration of Forster/Rudolph's tragic fate.⁵³

Indeed, all three novels – Huber's, Godwin's and Shelley's – foreground blighted subjectivities, which in turn structure their ambivalent, unreal settings: Huber's Pacific *terra nullius*; Godwin's Gothicised England; Shelley's Arctic wastelands. Each ends tragically: Forster/Rudolph dies alone, Caleb succumbs to defeat and self-hatred, the creature intends to sacrifice himself on an Arctic funeral pyre. Unlike *Caleb Williams* yet like the *Abentheuer*, *Frankenstein* poses family ties as something of an antidote to the nihilism of male revolutionary/Promethean ambition. Arguably Huber's challenge to the hubris of progressivism is more unsettling than Shelley's, however, not just because it is self-consciously aware of the family's limitations as well as its promise, but because it places a woman – an unrepentant female convict, no less – at the centre of its global vision. With this move, Huber plausibly conceives of New Holland both as a place where revolutionary failure could go to die *and* as a political sanctuary where victims of social injustice could experience muted forms of moral regeneration.

The links between the *Abentheuer*, *Caleb Williams* and *Frankenstein* were not in any simple way linear or causal. Leaving questions of literary influence aside, we can conclude that a compelling set of structural affinities shaped their post-revolutionary stories. In the wake of progressivist political failure in both German-speaking and English contexts in the 1790s, it is perhaps unsurprising that the *Abentheuer's* fantasy of Pacific settler colonialism should share so much with the emergent Anglophone political novel. What this affinity underscores, nonetheless, is the degree to which even as European writers reckoned differently with old order collapse and restoration, the structure of imagination that informed their stories drew upon and gained particular energy from global and colonial horizons, both real and imagined. In this broad sense, Therese Huber's *Abentheuer* and the early Australian penal colony it imagines can be understood as *Frankenstein's* Antipodean forebears.

Notes

1. On tropes of wonder and curiosity, see David Fausett, *Images of the Antipodes in the Eighteenth Century: A Study in Stereotyping*, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1994. On the influence of Cook's voyages, see Bernard Smith, *European Vision and the South Pacific, 1768–1850*, 2nd ed., Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1985; Bernard Smith, *Imagining the Pacific: In the Wake of the Cook Voyages*, London: Yale University Press, 1992, pp 135–171; Forster's, *A Voyage Round the World*, Nicholas Thomas and Oliver Berghof (eds), Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2000, introduction, pp. xxxvi–xliii. Edward Gibbon Wakefield's *Letter from Sydney* (1829), which envisaged the future New South Wales as a self-governing colonial society based on land ownership, exemplifies later systematised settler colonial projects.
2. The legal principle of 'terra nullius' legitimised the British colonisation of Australia by deeming it land 'belonging to no one' prior to Cook's arrival in 1770. The High Court's 1992 Mabo judgement overturned the principle by recognising pre-existing Indigenous rights and interests in the land and paving the way for the Native Title Act of 1993.
3. Huber's text is not mentioned by Zantop, who notes that a German tradition of colonialist fantasy dating back to the sixteenth century pre-existed any actual German colonisation. See Susanne Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies: Conquest, Family, and Nation in Precolonial Germany, 1770–1870*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997.
4. Much of the current archive of scholarship on 'global romanticism' remains orientated to the East rather than to the Asia-Pacific per se. See for instance, Saree Makdissi, *Romantic Imperialism: Universal Empire and the Culture of Modernity*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998; Peter Kitson and Tim Fulford, *Romanticism and Colonialism: Writing and Empire, 1780–1830*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998; Peter J Kitson, *Forging Romantic China: Sino-British Cultural Exchange 1760–1840*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013; Gerard Cohen-Vrignaud, *Radical Orientalism: Rights, Reform, and Romanticism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015; James Watt, *British Orientalisms, 1759–1835*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019.
5. William Clark, *Academic Charisma and the Origins of the Research University*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2006, pp 207–208, 247. And on Heine at Göttingen, pp 320–321.
6. Clark, *Academic Charisma*, pp 103–104.
7. The novel's full title is *Die Familie Seldorf: Eine Erzählung aus der französischen Revolution*. Jeannine Blackwell notes that it is possibly the only contemporary novel of the French Revolution to appear in German. See 'Therese Huber' in *German Writers in the Age of Goethe, 1789–1832*, James Hardin and Christoph E Schweitzer (eds), Detroit, MI: Gale, 1989, p 189. Scholarship on the novel includes Helmut Peitsch, 'Die Revolution im Familienroman: Aktuelles politisches Thema und konventionelle Romanstruktur in Therese Hubers *Die Familie Seldorf*, *Jahrbuch der Deutschen Schillergesellschaft* 28, 1984, pp 248–269; Stephanie

- M Hilger, *Gender and Genre: German Women Write the French Revolution*, Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2014, pp 23–45; and Sarah Vandegrift Eldridge, *Novel Affinities: Composing the Family in the German Novel, 1795–1830*, Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2016, pp 110–114.
8. Huber's *Abentheuer* goes unmentioned in the following monographs on German colonial and romantic fiction: Zantop's *Colonial Fantasies*; Kate Rigby's *Topographies of the Sacred: The Poetics of Place in European Romanticism*, Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2004; and Robert Cowan's *The Indo-German Identification: Reconciling South Asian Origins and European Destinies 1765–1885*, Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2010.
 9. Anglophone scholarship on the *Abentheuer* includes: Alan Corkhill, *Antipodean Encounters: Australia and the German Literary Imagination, 1754–1918*, New York: P. Lang, 1990; Michaela Krug, "A Huge Land Without Life and Without Murder": Australia in Therese Forster-Huber's *Adventures on a Journey to New Holland*', in P Monteath and F S Zuckerman (eds), *Modern Europe: Histories and Identities*, Adelaide: Australian Humanities Press, 1998, pp 353–363; and Judith Wilson's two excellent essays, 'Abjection, Subjection, Redemption: Georg Forster's and Therese Huber's Perspectives on the Penal Colony', *Georg-Forster-Studien* 14, 2009, pp 133–188, and "'Wen die Schande einmal gefaßt hat ...': Therese Huber's *Abentheuer auf einer Reise nach Neu-Holland* and the Question of Guilt', in A Bandhauer and M Veber (eds), *Migration and Cultural Contact. Germany and Australia*, Sydney: Sydney University Press, 2009, pp 223–240.
 10. Bodi's edition made Huber's text available to Anglophone readers; he was a Hungarian-Jewish refugee and founding professor of German studies at Monash University in Melbourne. Huber's original German text is available in Heuser's edited collection of her works, published in 1999. 'Abentheuer auf einer Reise nach Neu-Holland', in M Heuser (ed), *Romane und Erzählungen* 7, Haldesheim: Olms, 1999, pp 84–253.
 11. Huber grew up reading English novels in her father's house and later translated English novels in Mainz with Forster. Her friend, Dorothea Margarete Forkel, translated Inchbald's *A Simple Story* in 1792 and William Godwin's *Caleb Williams* in 1795. See Peitsch 'Die Revolution', p 250 n 11.
 12. The journal's full title was *Flora: Teutschlands Töchtern geweiht von Freunden und Freundinnen des schönen Geschlechts*, Flora: Germany's Daughters dedicated by Friends of the Fair Sex. The story was originally serialised in *Flora* 4, 1793: pp 241–274 and *Flora* 1, 1794: pp 7–43, 209–275.
 13. Forster's German translation of his *Voyage*, titled *Reise um die Welt* (1778) introduced the newly discovered South Pacific to the German reading public and was acclaimed for the freshness and clarity of its prose. In his preface to the German edition, Forster emphasised the subjective nature of description in travel writing. Leading German literary figures of the day praised the text, including Alexander von Humboldt, who held it to be the first truly modern account of scientific exploration. See Graham Jefcoate, 'Forster, (Johann) Georg Adam (1754–1794)' in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, May 2016.
 14. When Georg Forster visited Paris in July 1793, he met with Thomas Paine, Mary Wollstonecraft and others at the house of Thomas Christie. See K W Cameron (ed), *Shelley and his Circle, 1773–1822*, Vol. 1, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961, p 125. Peter Marshall also notes that he transcribed extracts from the copy of Godwin's *Political Justice* which Charrelin had delivered to the National Convention. See *William Godwin*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984, p 119. On Forster's period in Paris, see also Peter Morgan, 'Republicanism, Identity and the New European Order: Georg Forster's Letters from Mainz and Paris 1792–93', *Journal of European Studies* 22(1), 1992, pp 71–100.
 15. 'In Paris during the Revolution, Forster was the first to subsume the Kantian philosophy of history under the new and fashionable concept of emancipation.' Reinhard Kosseleck, 'The Limits of Emancipation: A Conceptual-historical Sketch', in Todd Samuel Presner (trans), *The Practice of Conceptual History: Timing History, Spacing Concepts*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002, p 254.

16. 'Cook the discoverer' (1787), qtd in John Gascoigne, 'The German Enlightenment and the Pacific', in Larry Wolff and Marco Cipolloni (eds), *The Anthropology of the Enlightenment*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007, p 163. Forster's earlier (1786) essay on the Pacific is 'Neuholland und die brittische Colonie in Botany-Bay', in Akademie der Wissenschaften der DDR (ed), *Georg Forsters Werke: Sämtliche Schriften, Tagebücher, Briefe* 5, Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1985, pp 161–183.
17. Therese Huber, *Adventures on a Journey to New Holland and The Lonely Deathbed*, Rodney Livingstone (trans), Leslie Bodi (ed), Melbourne: Lansdowne Press, 1966, p 21.
18. Huber, *Adventures*, p 33.
19. Qtd in Gascoigne, 'The German Enlightenment', p 163.
20. Huber, *Adventures*, p 37.
21. Huber, *Adventures*, p 23.
22. Huber, *Adventures*, p 33.
23. Huber, *Adventures*, p 22.
24. Huber, *Adventures*, pp 22–23, 36–37 and p 65 respectively.
25. Huber, *Adventures*, p 49.
26. Wilson, 'Abjection, Subjection', p 165; "Wen die Schande einmal gefaßt hat ...", pp 136–137.
27. Huber, *Adventures*, p 49.
28. Huber, *Adventures*, p 98.
29. For a more extended reading of the Frances Belton narrative and its deployment of sympathy, see Wilson, 'Abjection, Subjection', pp 179–187; "Wen die Schande einmal gefaßt hat ...", pp 232–234.
30. Once again, Wilson's scholarship is instructive: on Huber's engagement with Forster's account of Norfolk Island in his *Voyage Round the World*, see 'Abjection, Subjection', pp. 174–177; "Wen die Schande einmal gefaßt hat ...", pp 229–231.
31. Huber, *Adventures*, p 50.
32. Huber, *Adventures*, pp 60, 214.
33. Huber, *Adventures*, pp 62–64, p 114.
34. Huber, *Adventures*, p 61.
35. Huber, *Adventures*, p 98. Arguably Huber's settler vision channels a soft version of the German reaction to the Jacobin terror which rejected the contractarian models of sovereignty and society and embraced instead domesticity and family as a basis of community. See Adrian Daub, 'The State as a Family: The Fate of Familial Sovereignty in German Romanticism', *Republics of Letters: A Journal for the Study of Knowledge, Politics, and the Arts* 2(2), 2011. Available at: <https://arcade.stanford.edu/rofl/state-family-fate-familial-sovereignty-german-romanticism>.
36. Huber, *Adventures*, p 110. 'The Lonely Deathbed' was likely written in 1804 and published in 1810, under L F Huber's name, as part of his collected works. See Bodi, p 127. His edition's translation of *The Lonely Death Bed* is based on the text printed in *L. F. Hubers sämtliche Werke seit dem Jahre 1802, Zweiter Theil*, Tübingen, 1810, pp 319–349.
37. Huber, *Adventures*, p 115.
38. Huber, *Adventures*, pp 115, 122.
39. See Peitsch, 'Die Revolution', p 250 n 11.
40. Huber, *Adventures*, p 48.
41. William Godwin, *Caleb Williams*, Pamela Clemit (ed), Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009, p 311 and Huber, *Adventures*, p 123.
42. Percy and Mary Shelley's personal library included John Pinkerton's *A General Collection of the Best and Most Interesting Voyages and Travels in All Parts of the World* (1807–14) which contained abstracts of Cook's three voyages along with antipodean travel accounts by Pelsart, Tasman, Dampier and Peron, but not Forster. See *The Journals of Mary Shelley: 1814–1844*, Paula R Feldman and Diana Scott-Kilvert (eds), Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987. Huber's text was untranslated and Syndy McMillen Conger confirms that Mary Shelley read little or no

- German, 'A German Ancestor for Mary Shelley's Monster: Kahlert, Schiller, and the Buried Treasure of "Northanger Abbey"', *Philological Quarterly* 59(2), 1980, p 216.
43. Elizabeth Leane, *Antarctica in Fiction: Imaginative Narratives of the Far South*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012. Leane discusses Shelley's *Frankenstein* in the context of what she terms 'Arctic Gothic' (pp 60ff), which assumes that Frankenstein's polar point of reference is the Arctic not the Antarctic. Coleridge's 'Ancient Mariner' is the more usual point of reference for discussions of Forster's influence. See, for instance, Bernard Smith, 'Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner* and Cook's second voyage', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 19, 1956, pp 117–154; Arndt Bohm, 'Georg Forster's *A Voyage Round the World* as a Source for "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner": A Reconsideration', *ELH* 50(2), 1983, pp 363–377; Luke Strongman, 'Captain Cook's Voyages and Coleridge's "Rime of the Ancient Mariner"', *Junctions* 12, 2009, pp 69–81.
 44. A generation of feminist scholars has read *Frankenstein* in these terms, including Mary Poovey, *The Proper Lady and the Woman Writer: Ideology as Style in the Works of Mary Wollstonecraft, Mary Shelley, and Jane Austen*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1985; and Anne K Mellor, *Mary Shelley, Her Life, Her Fiction, Her Monsters*, London: Routledge, 1989.
 45. Huber, *Adventures*, p 25.
 46. Huber, *Adventures*, pp 35–37.
 47. Anders Sparrman, *A Voyage to the Cape of Good Hope: Towards the Antarctic Polar Circle, and Round the World: But Chiefly into the Country of the Hottentots and Caffres, from the Year 1772, to 1776*, London: printed for G G J and J Robinson, 1785.
 48. Judith Wilson, 'Abjection, Subjection', pp 169ff.
 49. Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, *Frankenstein, Or, The Modern Prometheus: The 1818 Text*, Oxford World's Classics, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018, pp 83ff.
 50. Shelley, *Frankenstein*, pp 87–88.
 51. Shelley, *Frankenstein*, p 87.
 52. Shelley, *Frankenstein*, p 96.
 53. Shelley, *Frankenstein*, p 119.

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