

Introduction

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The oceanic turn has been under way for some time now. Whether we date this turn as occurring with the publication of Fernand Braudel's *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Phillip II* (1949), with Paul Gilroy's *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (1993), or with oral and written work by Indigenous and other intellectuals from the Caribbean, Oceania, Africa, and elsewhere, this strand of historical and imaginative thought has, in the past two decades, coalesced into a far more complex formation.¹ One major aspect of work that has been woven into humanist and Indigenous accounts of the oceanic is the scientific exploration of the seas, a process that began with the earliest European imperial voyages.² In the past few decades oceanography, geophysics, and evolutionary and marine biology have drawn our attention down to the smallest units of the microbial seas, undetected through ordinary human perception, and upward to a scale of millions of years of evolution. The result of this scientific calibration along inhuman scales has been a reconceptualization of what life is and where it occurs. For instance, recent work in cellular biology and the DNA sequencing of marine microbes, as Stefan Helmreich reports, have posited life forces for which we have no conceptual categories: "Aliens [marine microbial realms inaccessible to prosthetic-free human experience] are life forms whose place in our forms of life is yet to be determined."³ Though often these genetic and microbial discoveries are commodified on behalf of corporations, in the hands of science studies scholars and environmental activists the net effect has been to posit the sea as a material actant in a posthumanist world.⁴ Stacy Alaimo has called this relation "transcorporeality" to suggest that we coevolve with the seas and are part of, rather than separate from, the unknown future of the world's becoming.⁵ For instance, humans have polluted the seas with heavy metals, nuclear waste, and plastics, with the result that human bodies, along with marine and terrestrial animals, carry profound, often life-threatening, toxic burdens that are assumed unevenly across the globe.⁶ In addition, the concept of transcorporeality questions the guise of detached objectivity that science has long claimed and demands self-awareness of how we impact—and mediate—the very environments we study.

The second strand of sea thinking to join with the sciences and humanities is environmentalism, an interdisciplinary mode of inquiry that draws not only on

these disciplines but also on the social sciences and activist art and politics. From the incontrovertible evidence that we are in the midst of the sixth extinction to ocean acidification and warming temperatures, rising sea levels, melting ice, overfishing, and oil and nuclear contamination, we are confronted with an ongoing, human-induced catastrophe. The systemic crises of the oceans demand a wide range of responses, from studying oceanic geophysics, to constructing posthuman understandings of the sea and its organisms, to interrogating human/nonhuman marine relations in order to rethink the ethics of human actions toward the nonhuman world so that they might be nondominating, even erotic and pleasurable. Given the sheer multiplicity and stunning possibilities that work on the oceanic brings to paradigms of thought, criticism, visual arts, reading practices, and ethical and political action, “Hydro-criticism” is only one of many recent interventions into maritime critical inquiry. Before I turn to the groundbreaking articles assembled in this special issue, I will briefly highlight important recent interventions in oceanic studies made by scholars working in cultural studies, gender/queer studies, literary studies, and global South/postcolonial studies. The aim of this review is to set the stage for understanding exactly how the contents of this special issue furthers the critical and creative interventions made possible by the maritime turn.

In 2010 a highly visible *PMLA* forum, “Theories and Methodologies,” brought attention to the sea not as an “empty” space crosshatched by longitude and latitude markers over which ships traverse but as an ecological environs, a “hydro-commons,” and the vanishing point of “nature.” Rather than nature, the sea, in the lead columnist Patricia Yaeger’s words, has become a “techno-ocean” that “subtracts sea creatures and adds trash” on a sublimely horrendous and ecocidal scale.⁷ She memorably includes a photo of a dead baby seabird whose autopsy revealed 12.2 ounces of plastic debris in its stomach that its parents had mistaken for food, resulting in its death of malnutrition and dehydration. In the same collection, Margaret Cohen, a contributor to this special issue, called out literary critics’ “hydrophasia,” a forgetting of the sea whereby *Robinson Crusoe* becomes a tale of economics rather than shipwreck; *Moby-Dick* concerns factory labor; and Conrad’s “The Secret Sharer” plumbs the ship commander’s narcissistic personality.⁸ Unlike Braudel’s or Gilroy’s earlier interventions, Cohen’s critical emphasis comes squarely on board the ship itself, rather than on how regional geographies (the Mediterranean and the Atlantic) can transform critical paradigms. She stresses the work of navigation and sail and how narratives of maritime mobility and practical reason helped invent the novel. Her maritime criticism, to some extent, parallels the groundbreaking work of the historians Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, whose attention to impressed sailors, slaves, pirates, and other outlaws of early Atlantic modernity demonstrates the long history of working-class resistance and cross-racial alliance that had been largely erased from view.

Another contributor to this *ELN* special issue, Hester Blum, in the same *PMLA* cluster, notes, “If methodologies of the nation and postnation have been landlocked, . . . then an oceanic turn might allow us to derive new forms of relatedness from the necessarily unbounded examples provided in the maritime world.”⁹ She charges that concepts such as citizenship, sovereignty, and labor, when viewed from the masthead, take on guises unfamiliar to nation-based assumptions. These

counterhistories challenge the homogenizing assumptions of nationalism and anticipate a future—and recover a past—that is multiracial, multilingual, and international in its solidarities. Finally, and in a different vein altogether, Elizabeth DeLoughrey, also featured in this issue, draws on Caribbean writers such as Édouard Glissant and Kamau Brathwaite, among others, to figure the maritime regions of the Atlantic as “heavy waters,” which she defines as “an ocean stasis that signals the dissolution of wasted lives.”¹⁰ Rather than posit the ocean depths as a void of no importance to human history, DeLoughrey demonstrates how, for descendants of Africans forcibly brought to the New World, the Atlantic does not connote enhanced freedoms and mobility of sail, as it did for early European novelists and explorers, but serves as a monument to the millions dead. The ocean describes a morass and limit to knowledge, but it is also an integral part of human history.¹¹ The Latin word *vastus*, as DeLoughrey points out, signifies not only the oceanic scale but also waste, and this doubled meaning extends into the present day as she traces the parallels between slave migrations and the contemporary treatment of refugees from all parts of the global South. The state plays a pivotal role in patrolling the seas and signaling the worth of these peoples. *Waste* also references the sea as “empty” and therefore the sense that its depths are of no concern to humans. This belief makes the sea available to absorb nuclear and other by-products of industrialization without fear of reprisal. But of course, as DeLoughrey argues, waste, whether human or otherwise, is precisely what constitutes the heavy, toxic waters of the Atlantic and beyond in a manner that endangers all planetary life.

In 2017 the American Comparative Literature Association forum “Oceanic Routes,” edited by Isabel Hofmeyr—a contributor to this issue—and Kerry Bystrom, moved the conversation from a largely North Atlantic regional focus to understudied areas of the South Atlantic, Indian, and Pacific Oceans. In addition, they emphasize the material and geophysical dimensions of the sea that, as Blum says, allow for “a new epistemology—a new dimension—for thinking about surfaces, depths, and the extra-terrestrial dimensions of planetary resources and relations.”¹² In addition, Hofmeyr and Bystrom address the issue of imperial power and dominance at sea, a focus underscored by their neologism *hydrocolonial*, which signals, as they put it, “an affinity with postcolonialism so crucial to the Southern regions we engage.”¹³ The legacy of imperialism persists in the ways that we imagine the seas geographically. In that same collection, Alice Te Punga Somerville reminds us that the Pacific Ocean was called El Mar del Sur (the South Sea) by its first European “discoverer,” Vasco Núñez de Balboa, who then claimed all lands touching that ocean for Spain. Its status as a belated (Southern) addition to ocean studies, which began for academics, as mentioned above, in institutions in the West with the Mediterranean and Atlantic, is belied by Oceanic peoples’ Indigenous history as having always been oriented to the sea and having always practiced an oceanic turn.¹⁴ Taking heed of this Northern bias that renders Oceania a local particularity and afterthought, an afterword by Rachel Price suggests that “categories proper to aesthetics [might] help us grasp otherwise unrepresentable or unassimilable climate change and crisis, without allegorizing or merely miming a human/nonhuman relation. Such work offers one way that certain oceanic studies might continue to be specifically rooted in the oceans without their materiality becoming an imaginative

constraint.”¹⁵ It is also precisely here that scholars of film, art, and literature, such as those gathered in this *ELN* issue, can provide their greatest provocations. An advantage of film, art, and literature as they mediate science, politics, history, geography, and maritime environments lies in their imaginative engagement in these discourses and materialities. The arts can imagine alternatives to the long history of the domination of nature. Price reminds us that the arts often distance us from reality in a manner that fosters alternative ways of thinking about human/nonhuman environments. The arts, as the contributors gathered in “Hydro-criticism” variously claim, imagine new feminist and queer relations between humans and nonhumans, create new kinds of aesthetics untethered to realist cartographies, and raise awareness of the imperial “hydro-power” that claims the seas for its own.

Hofmeyr begins our special issue with the South African Koleka Putuma’s poem “Water” (2017). In her reading of Putuma’s work, Hofmeyr reminds us that the leisure space of the seaside is underwritten by histories of dispossession, “launched from the littoral.” Building on her previous work on “hydrocolonialism” mentioned above, Hofmeyr expands this term to mean not only colonization *by means of* water and colonization *of* water (the occupation of land with water resources, the appropriation of territorial waters, and the militarization of oceans) but also a colony *on* or *in* water (the ship as a floating penal colony and infamous penal islands such as Robben, Alcatraz, Rikers, Devil’s, St. Helena, and Isabela). In addition, the term *hydrocolonial* names housing estates on hydroelectric plants in Canada and is a misspelling of *hydrocolonic*, both of which—the latter unwittingly—express the effects of hydrocolonialism as environmental degradation and colonial control, while *hydrocolonic* adds fears of disease and contamination from the flows of racialized peoples and goods through maritime travel and commerce. The term *hydrocolonial* underscores the uneven histories of the oceanic: how the seas might mean leisure, desire, and adventure, on the one hand, and fears of drowning, flooding, and contamination, on the other. To address the latter, Hofmeyr tracks the circulation of print (mail, newspapers, books, pamphlets, logbooks, journals, letters) as they are carried, written, and read on board ship and were policed in ports of call. Ports are vital checkpoints and stopgaps to the influx of seditious literature, revolutionary ideas, and people, feared by the state to be carriers of disease and contamination. The importance of gateways to national territories or, as Harris Feinsod relates, to other oceans via canals, reveals that as much as the seas have been lauded for enabling “flows,” “circulation,” and for serving as the connective tissue between geographies, nations, and languages, they are also regulated by means of ports, papers, inspections, quarantines, and refusals to prove insurmountable barriers. The seas remain racialized and colonized.

This political understanding of the seas is pressed further by DeLoughrey as she praises the recent turn to the seas as “wet matter,” flows, fluidity, and mobility but cautions that “other, less poetic terms such as blue water navies, mobile offshore bases, high-seas exclusion zones, sea lanes of communication (SLOCs), and maritime ‘choke points’” are perhaps more vital to understanding the geopolitics, hydrocolonialism, and environmental destruction of the seas. She opens with a warning to readers that the largest naval military exercise in history occurred in

the fall of 2018, when this issue was under way. These exercises included all Pacific Rim nations allied with the United States, an alliance extended to India in May 2018 when the US Pacific Command was renamed the US Indo-Pacific Command. This inclusion enlarged the Pacific Rim region to the western coast of the Indian subcontinent and encompasses 100 million square miles of ocean surface. DeLoughrey directs “the focus of *hydro-criticism* toward *hydro-power*, defined as energy, force, militarism, and empire.” Not only does military power ensure the transfer of oil and other energy across the planetary seas, but militaries are the largest consumers of fossil fuels. Further, their naval exercises result in massive marine animal deaths, often from sonic pollution. Given the huge ecological ramifications of petromilitarism, DeLoughrey asks, following Amitav Ghosh’s influential work, why there are so few petrofiction novels. She argues that Ghosh is looking in the wrong place: the human-centric scale of the European novel tradition cannot encompass planetary, multiscaled intra-actions. She suggests instead that Indigenous, feminist, and postcolonial literature can make imaginatively perceptible the new scales and geographies of hydrocolonialism and petro-economies. Her example of this capability is poetry by Craig Santos Perez. We are grateful to him for granting us permission to reproduce elements from the cover of his book of poetry [*saina*] for this issue’s cover. The montage neatly captures the range of “Hydro-criticism’s” interventions, from Indigenous to military understandings of the sea.

This issue’s first section, “Hydro-power: Charting the Global South,” concludes with Meg Samuelson and Charne Lavery’s essay “The Oceanic South.” They begin by noting that the hemispheric South contains 20 percent more surface-area water than the North and continues to be dominated by extractive economies and settler colonialism. But, they continue, the Southern Hemisphere offers both centrality and prescience for considering maritime planetarity. Evoking the turbulent, three-dimensional space of southern seas, they argue for the importance of a regional geography that interlinks the Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian Oceans as well as the frozen continent of Antarctica. Drawing on fiction by J. M. Coetzee, Zakes Mda, and Witi Ihimaera, Samuelson and Lavery draw attention to how these fictions chart the mobility of the South Seas as well as the intersecting itineraries of interspecies migrations. Endangerment and mass slaughter, whether of penguins or of whales, refer us back to the long history of global resource extraction that constitutes the South, but literary evocations of their experience also express an alterity that is underived from humans and that, as Samuelson and Lavery argue, is alive to “more-than-human” oceanic materialities and multispecies interactions.

One reader who reviewed an article for this issue expressed the concern that when maritime literary and cultural scholars textualize the waters, they reduce the oceanic to a fashionable metaphor. Among these eminent scholars, this is decidedly not the case. First, as all the contributors assert—especially Cohen in her work on undersea film technologies—the alien environment of the sea requires that it be mediated through language, cameras, scientific instruments, and prostheses. In the next section, “Hydro-imaginaries,” the essays draw our attention to the work of mediation: how what we know about the oceans is partial, situated, and shot through with imagination and desire. In her fascinating essay, Cohen unearths the film

technologies and mise-en-scène by which filmmakers oriented audiences to the alien depths of the sea in the early postwar underwater films Disney's *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea* (1954) and Jacques Cousteau and Louis Malle's *Silent World* (1956). These familiarizing techniques then allowed the filmmakers to highlight the spellbinding, otherworldly qualities of this realm, including an infamous shark feeding frenzy of a baby tooth whale that Cousteau's boat inadvertently killed with its propellers. While Cohen rightly criticizes the sensationalized portrayal of the sharks' natural behavior in the film (Cousteau's boat, after all, had killed the whale), her essay also raises an implicit question: What are other possible apparatuses (Indigenous, animal, microbial, feminist, queer, utopian) that mediate the seas and what alternatives do they make visible and/or knowable?

Often these alternatives are ignored at our peril, as Blum's essay shows. "Arctic Nation" proposes that "hydro-criticism" should take as its first principle "the elemental fluidity of the seas" such that "the undulating, nonhuman, nonplanar depths of the sea [serve] as a model for critical expansiveness." Rather than territorialize the seas, as hydrocolonialism and, on a lesser scale, underwater film techniques are wont to do, the oceanic "has a scalar fluidity that enables the hydrographic world to be at once global and microecological." Echoing, I believe, Samuelson and Lavery's claims for the planetary nature of the seas, Blum focuses the rest of her essay on a cautionary tale: the disastrous mission of the US-sponsored Lady Franklin Bay Arctic Expedition (1881–84) and the particular fate of Charles Buck Henry on Ellesmere Island, the northernmost island in the Canadian archipelago. Refusing to provision with local foods or engage in collective strategies of survival, most of the crew died, Henry was executed for stealing food, and many resorted to cannibalism. Blum offers this chilling tale as exemplary of "the flaws in importing a proprietary Western nationalism to an oceanic space."

Sometimes the grim administration of hydrocolonial power is best repulsed with a dose of humor. Teresa Shewry's essay on the darkly comic absurdity of Australian novelist Jane Rawson's futurist novel *A Wrong Turn at the Office of Unmade Lists* argues that humor arises when incongruity is pointed out. The novel is set in Melbourne, a city vulnerable to sea-level rise as well as to drought, heat waves, flooding, and fires. Its humor, Shewry argues, aims at "people's radically disproportionate contributions and exposures to the violence of sea-level rise and to precarious freshwater conditions." Her reading of the novel also tracks characters' strategies of survival, ways that unseen forces limit human intentions and apprehensions, and how ambivalent interdependences arise out of resource disparity. The novel's humor breaks the surface of uniformity—as a hydro-critical reading project must—revealing "intricate patterns of constraint, disproportion, and disruption."

Jeremy Chow and Brandi Bushman, two new voices in oceanic studies, take our hydro-critical reading project in a different, but highly necessary, direction: the question of embodiment and intraspecies relations. Referring us back to where we began this introduction, in the churning, mobile waters that intra-act with bodies, Chow and Bushman argue for a "hydro-eroticism" that "emphasize[s] erotic connectivities that bodies of water foster, while also remaining mindful of how fluid affiliations are policed, inhibited, or persecuted." They draw on queer theory and feminism to read Hulu's smash-hit television series *The Handmaid's Tale* and the

2017 Oscar award-winning film *The Shape of Water*. Their lively and critically incisive argument extends the analysis of “hydro-power” in the first section, and in Blum’s essay, but moves away from large-scale planetary geopolitics to burrow down into questions of more-than-human embodiment. Water, in this essay, is an active participant in intimacies and pleasures. Chow and Bushman deploy Barad’s concept of intra-activity to read water as it seeps through bodies and joins various participants and sites of sexuality in a manner that underscores human/nonhuman interdependencies and affirms queer pleasures against the ever-present backdrop of violent suppression.

What I was not entirely prepared for in editing this special issue was the prevalence of essays I received concerning state power, such that a major portion of “hydro-criticism” consists in anatomizing the workings and forms of “hydro-power.” Even those essays that concern the seemingly more mundane genres of underwater adventure films and the comic novel indirectly invoke submarine warfare, Navy SEALs, and municipal decisions concerning equitable access to freshwater and fostering environmentally sustainable cities. Our historical moment has indeed shifted, which also occasions new parallels to the past. It was not only my own research interests in modernism that prompted the third section of this special issue, “Hydro-critical Practices: Modernism and the Sea,” but the fact that in the recent challenges to US empire, one cannot but hear uncanny echoes of modernism, an era that witnessed the end of European hegemony. Questions of state power and empire have returned with a vengeance. Not only that, but I was curious to understand why sustained work on maritime modernism was, until recently, not widely embarked on. As one contributor, Nicole Rizzuto, affirms, the early twentieth century is “a dead zone in the history of seafaring literature.” Against the romantic heyday of sail in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the late nineteenth century saw the rise of coal-powered steamers, maritime workers’ unions, and technologies such as radio and electronic navigation that lessened the wild freedoms (that is, the unregulated and horrendous violence) of sail at sea. In addition to the technological curtailments of what Carl Schmitt calls the “free sea,” the extended imperial crisis of the modernist era multiplied existing controls and obstructions to maritime travel.¹⁶ Feinsod, in his essay on the modernist era of the Panama Canal, neatly captures the range of obstructions of global flows and maritime cosmopolitanisms that have characterized the early to mid-portion of the twentieth century. These include “customs houses, immigration bureaus and passport control, deferred wages, state surveillance, and world war.” Feinsod collocates the question of maritime circulation with the question of world literature and of how to write a comparative literary history. The proximity between an environment and a virtual community of letters makes sense, he says, only if we draw on the comparative terms Erich Auerbach lays out: “a tension among ‘diverse backgrounds’ converging on a ‘common fate,’ accessed by a method that seeks out multiple ‘points of departure’ coalescing around a synthetic or ‘coadunatory’ intuition.” To this last gasp of European idealism, Feinsod, quoting Aamir Mufti, adds the postcolonial caveat that, akin to the harsh realities of maritime travel, literary critics have shown that world literature is “a regime of *enforced* mobility and therefore of *immobility* as well.” Following the history of financial speculation—the booms and busts—of

the Panama Canal Zone and weaving together literary accounts of this zone by Blaise Cendrars, Claude McKay, Eric Walrond, Wallace Stevens, and the Nicaraguan poet Ernesto Cardenal, Feinsod tracks the “conflicts, disparities, and experiments in sovereignty that best [characterize] the Panama Canal as a peculiar choke point of maritime globalization.” This analysis refuses to equate all forms of sovereignty as Feinsod plumbs the depths of the “suction sea” with a reading of Walrond’s short story “Wharf Rats” from *Tropic Death* (1926). There wealthy passengers on imperial liners toss mixed currency into shark-infested waters, where young boys dive for it among the wreckage of previous investment schemes. The Panama genealogy that Feinsod traces produces a “spatial form of capitalism” that “invite[s] us to reassemble a vision of worldwide modernism.” While centered on one particular zone, this assemblage allows us to see the shards of unevenly distributed agencies across the globe: absent financial speculators in global centers, West Indian divers, Anglo-American tourist-spectators, modernist writers, and the material forces that shaped the canal.

Next, Rizzuto addresses the seeming dearth of seagoing fiction in the modernist era. After the subject of Conrad’s fiction shifts to urban anarchists, Latin American silver mines, and revolutionaries in Switzerland and Russia, it is hard to think of his successors. In fact, Rizzuto writes, there are a number of forgotten or neglected maritime novelists who focus on working-class mariners, failed itineraries, and disorienting stasis. She situates these narratives amid “the restructuring of global circuits of power and attendant transformations of ways of seeing by presenting the waters as cramped with networks that blindside travelers and stymie movement.” Focusing here on the British author James Hanley’s *Hollow Sea*, which looks back from 1938 upon the First World War, Rizzuto elaborates on how Hanley references Conrad but alters his topics to account for merchant sailors and ships that were conscripted into military operations. The novel details how a merchant ship was ordered to transport fifteen hundred troops to the Dardanelles in a failed wartime operation. The sea, Rizzuto writes, is rendered opaque and deadly, not least because navigation was centralized by wartime control—“network-centric warfare”—that turns out to have been neither clear nor complete. In sum, the very technological means of navigation and communication that once allowed sailing on the open seas “have become imprisoning, confining, and disorienting” in the context of modern industrialized naval warfare. Even the seas themselves—sabotaged by U-boats, infiltrated by explosives, blocked by competing sea powers—are crowded and dangerous.

Maxwell Uphaus’s essay concludes this cluster topic and allows us to circle back, in hydrospheric fashion, to where we began, with the early development of academic hydro-criticism itself. Noting the prevalence of epigraphs and references to T. S. Eliot’s “The Dry Salvages” in work by C. L. R. James, Peter Linebaugh, and DeLoughrey, he pursues the strange conundrum posed by the attraction to the poetry of the conservative, insular Eliot on the part of progressive, even radical, Caribbean scholars.¹⁷ One obvious reason is that “The Dry Salvages” highlights the sea’s role in transcending national frames and establishing vast spatiotemporal scales that outstrip an androcentric focus. Most important, the poem’s representations of the sea are shot through with many histories: nation building, empire

founding, and their subsequent eclipse. The sea, in Uphaus's words, "simultaneously make[s], memorializ[es], and eclips[es] human histories." The sea, thus, is both constitutive of British history and the force that undoes it, a force that includes the history of the slave trade. Eliot's poem displays a defensive posturing that, in portraying Britons as "victims of their own seaborne expansion," not only suppresses but supplants the dead of the Middle Passage. Moving from the Atlantic to the Mississippi and its legacy in the slave trade, to India, Eliot's poem represents different facets of the same imperial oceanic history. And while he minimizes the violence of the British in this history, Uphaus argues that the poem cannot keep this violence completely suppressed. It motivates how Eliot "reenvision[s] oceanic history as an ongoing, catastrophic process that leaves an ocean strewn with wastage." The poem, in this reading, questions both seaborne imperialism and insular nationalisms and thus can well serve as a springboard for later counterhistories of the seas.

This issue concludes with a review essay by Allison Nowak Shelton, "Learning from Rivers: Toward a Relational View of the Anthropocene." Shelton reminds us that rivers are an integral part of the planetary hydrosphere as well as an important bridge between deep geological time and shorter-term "surface" history, scientific data, and qualitative affective experiences, including myth and storytelling. They are also frequently the center of heated political and environmental struggles as well as studies that cross many academic disciplines. After reviewing a monograph and two important recent essay collections, Shelton ends with a reading of the Mee-nachil River in Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* (1997) and argues that cultural, political, and economic conceptions of rivers "are threads of a complex environmental network that determines and is determined by river ecology." Taken together, the wide-ranging essays that "Hydro-criticism" comprises demonstrate the critical advantages learned from the scalar fluidity and ineluctable materiality of water. Gleaning new perspectives, ontologies, and transmaterial subjectivities from the vantage point of the seas, these essays transform critical paradigms, artistic and reading practices, and erotic pleasures as well as draw our attention to maritime ethical and political urgencies.

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Notes

1 A few of the most influential Indigenous and global South nonfiction writers on the sea include Hau'ofa, Brathwaite, and Glissant (Somerville, *Once*). See also DeLoughrey, *Routes*; and Shewry, *Hope*.

2 Raban, *Oxford*, 28–29.

3 Helmreich, *Alien Ocean*, 17.

4 The term *intra-action* is used by Barad to underscore how subjects and objects are not preestablished entities but are derived from an interrelated "dynamism of forces" (*Meeting*, 141).

- Intra-action affirms the impossibility of separately derived and existing entities. These terms, *material actant* and *posthumanism*, can be understood to reflect the scientific perception of how human actions and marine environments mutually impact and even coconstitute one another. Seas and humans intra-act such that humans are permanently entangled with their environments, marine and otherwise.
- 5 Alaimo writes: "Trans-corporeality situates the (post)human as always already part of the world's intra-active agencies. For an oceanic sense of trans-corporeality to be an ethical mode of being, the material self must not be a finished, self-contained product of evolutionary genealogies but a site where the knowledges and practices of embodiment are undertaken as part of the world's becoming" (*Exposed*, 127).
 - 6 See Nixon, *Slow*.
 - 7 Yaeger, "Editor's Column," 530.
 - 8 Cohen, "Literary Studies," 658; see also Sekula, *Fish*.
 - 9 Blum, "Prospect," 671.
 - 10 DeLoughrey, "Heavy," 703.
 - 11 DeLoughrey, "Heavy," 704.
 - 12 Blum, "Introduction," 151. See also Steinberg and Peters, "Wet."
 - 13 Bystrom and Hofmeyr, "Oceanic Routes," 3.
 - 14 Somerville, "Where Oceans," 28.
 - 15 Price, "Afterword," 51–52.
 - 16 Schmitt, *Nomos*, 98–99.
 - 17 James, *Black*; Linebaugh, "All"; DeLoughrey, "Heavy."
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