Negotiating Waters

Seas, Oceans, and Passageways in the Colonial and Postcolonial Anglophone World

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Series in Literary Studies







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Introduction

André Dodeman and Nancy Pedri

Oceans and seas are important sites for differently situated people. [...] Oceans and seas are sites of inequality and exploitation [and] spaces of transnational and diasporic communities, heterogeneous trajectories of globalizations, and other racial, gender, class, and sexual formations.

Kale Fajardo, "Filipino Cross Currents: Histories of Filipino Seafaring – Asia and the Americas."

Waters have always held an important role in organizing the world. Maritime spaces and places have united and separated lands and their resources, but also people, cultures, empires, and religions. In "Theogany," Hesiod meticulously catalogues 25 of the children of Okeanos and Tethys (i.e., the rivers of the Earth), detailing their importance in relation to the land, but also to the people. He emphasizes that "Hard would it be for one mortal to tell all the names of these sons [the rivers that roar], / but everyone everywhere knows the rivers he happens to live by" (49, passage 369-370). However, the sea and water, in general, is much more than a resource (see Bakhuizen). Seas, oceans, and passageways are spaces of exploration and expansion, trade and defense, national and insular identity.

In the history of human migration, entire communities have crossed seas and oceans, voluntarily or not, to settle in foreign lands and undergo identity, cultural, and literary transformations. In this sense, waters are points of departure where paths cross and cultures intersect. Holding promises of wealth and power, the sea fosters an exchange of peoples but also goods, capital, and commercial information. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari wrote that, even though the sea has often been considered a smooth space – a space that "leaves no traces, and has no place name, towns or dwelling places" (Boelhower 92) – it is nevertheless a space that humans are still attempting to striate, transform, and submit to the land (598). Throughout history, seas, oceans, and passageways have been arenas of intense conflict and competition where questions of politics, economy, governance, and identity intersect in struggles of power. They have often served as stages upon which the fates

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of entire nations were decided and sealed. Individuals, empires, and countries have vied over them in an attempt to appropriate, with words or weapons, the waters that surround them even when their very nature is to elude territorial claims and the demarcation of boundaries.

As empires began to expand and reach the remotest parts of the world, entire oceans were explored, mapped and placed under imperial domination. The nautical Battle of Actium fought on the Ionian Sea in 31 BCE has been reimagined and revisited by historians and artists alike as a struggle between two Roman leaders, one of whom would rise to power and mark the birth of a new Roman empire. Over a thousand years after the collapse of the Roman Empire, the British Empire sought power over seas and oceans with a larger view to controlling the world. Historical and literary texts have posited its dominance over the Atlantic Ocean as essential to its preservation and longevity. In the late 18th and early 19th centuries, conflicts broke out between the British and other colonial empires and the rising nations that sought to secure oceans, seas, and passageways as part of their national territory. The war of 1812 between Great Britain and the United States was interpreted by many Americans as a second victorious revolution that strengthened their new position as a superpower. Once again, the sea was a crucial component of nationalism as evidenced by historical and fictional narratives that go to great lengths to justify the nation's control of the Atlantic. James Fenimore Cooper's The Pilot: A Tale of the Sea (1823), his first novel entirely focussed on seamanship, defines the American Revolution as the founding historical moment when land and sea became coextensive and crucial to the fashioning of American identity. As these and other examples confirm, dominance over the sea has long been the necessary condition that makes national expansion and preservation possible.

With the discovery of the Americas in the late 15th century and the publication of the first world map by Martin Waldseemuller in 1507, control of the oceans became paramount to the rise and stability of countries seeking to become empires.¹ "Empire," as Nicholas A. M. Rodger specifies, "undoubtedly rested on sea-power" (Rodger 181). Indeed, "for nearly 500 years, men have been drawn by the vision of a commercially viable and strategically advantageous seaway that runs west and north from Europe to the Far East and back" (Griffiths 3). The realization that America was a separate continent in the first years of the sixteenth century gave way to a long period of discovery and exploration. England responded to Magellan's discovery of a Southwest passage

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¹ This map was also the first that used the name "America" to refer to the newly discovered lands across the Atlantic.

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to Asia in 1522 by sending its own explorers to find a Northwest passage that would secure its future position and supremacy in the world. Early explorers, including Martin Frobisher whose voyages took place in the 1570s and John Davis who explored the Arctic regions in the 1580s, attempted to find a Northwest passage to the Pacific despite extreme weather and international conflicts that were tearing Europe apart. England's failure was only temporary, and the Northwest passage continued to inspire seamen and writers alike. While countries and empires were looking for "a commercially viable and strategically advantageous seaway," explorers, very often impelled by a quest for adventure, sought to engrave their names in the long history of European exploration as well as in the landscapes themselves, as evidenced by the maps that continue to bear their names.

Not many years after the first failed attempts to find the Northwest passage, the 1588 British victory over the Spanish Armada initiated the spreading of the English language and of British commerce and culture overseas. This, in turn, triggered a period of maritime travel that spurred the literary imagination and gave rise to travel narratives, narratives of epic battles between mariners and pirates, and stories of marooned sailors who had to make do with little and face the threats of indigenous Others. The vast and far-reaching literary tradition spurred by waters and the desire to map, dominate, and integrate them into larger imperial structures celebrates national distinctiveness while also maintaining and building upon a worldwide maritime narrative legacy.

While seas have been viewed as spaces of exchange and connection, oceans have represented vast and supposedly empty spaces that separate and therefore define countries and entire continents. In the introduction to his 2013 collective study of the sea, Peter N. Miller makes an important distinction between using the two terms. He quotes Wim Klooster's view that "oceans are the grand narrative" and "seas the microhistories." This view, which does not intend to oppose seas and oceans or rank them in order of importance, invests seas with narratives and a dense "historical texture" (Miller 10). From a purely geographical viewpoint, the sea connects the ocean to the land. Indeed, many narratives of human travel and migration begin at the shore, a transitional space that foregrounds the great adventure involving human evolution from the mineral firmness of the land to the ever-shifting fluidity of the waters. In "The Prospect of Oceanic Studies," Hester Blum explains how worldviews change and new epistemological structures emerge depending on our position at sea. In a similar vein, Michel Foucault posits that the world is seen differently on board a ship; it is rediscovered from a different vantage point that sheds new light on existing political and cultural land-based constructs. Qualifying the ship as a piece of floating space, a radically different space that locks the onlooker out, Foucault theorizes the ship as a heterotopic x Introduction

space that grants its passengers a glimpse of another world and encourages them to reassess the one they live in.

Thus, apart from the building of sturdier ships and new inventions like the sextant to locate one's position on the globe, developments in maritime travel have resulted in the creation of new spaces. The harbor, for instance, is a liminal space where travelers and migrants lie in wait; it is also a contact zone between lands and waters, a chronotope of encounter or a passageway where routes, paths and itineraries intersect and mingle. The harbor is a place where heterogeneity and linguistic plurality thrive and where travelers and migrants meet (see Bakhtin 243). It is also a nodal space, a space of transition where the line separating past and present is visible as it marks the passage from older, more stable identities to the formation of newer, more fluid ones. Such a space compels tourists and immigrants alike to imagine, but also invent and inscribe new identities in the face of uncertainty and the unknown. The harbor, and similar spaces, thus serves as a metaphor for identity as "a 'production' which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation" (Hall 234).

Seas and oceans are also riddled with islands and archipelagos that appear as autonomous spaces, disconnected and isolated from the continent and the world at large. Often perceived as smaller microcosmic spaces, islands are spaces that exist on the margins of dominant national narratives and discourses. Oftentimes, the local cultures of islands conflict with larger national constructs. In "Island Fictions and Metaphors in Contemporary Literature," Katrin Dautel and Kathrin Schödel review the different definitions of islands in historical and fictional Western narratives that show islands as breaking free from essentializing categories. While some critics see islands as spaces "of stability and closure in contrast to the changeable, open sea," others view them as "open, hybrid, and ambivalent" (Dautel and Schödel 230). As a matter of course, representations of islands waver between the two poles of absolute closure and unlimited openness. Edouard Glissant, however, proposes an "archipelagic thinking" that approaches islands as dynamic parts of a whole as an alternative to what he calls systemic continental thinking that tends to homogenize spaces and dismiss diversity (Glissant 45). In his model, instead of being mere isolated, disconnected spaces, islands and archipelagos are spaces of movement and connection that challenge the continent and its static certainties about territory and identity. This fresh, renewed representation of the archipelago is all the more relevant as today's world of air travel and internet communication has transformed the planet into a globalized world of cross-cultural and transnational exchange in which islands are closely connected to the rest of the world. Today's world, more than ever, confirms John Donne's conviction that "no man is an island entire of itself" (Donne 622).

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Our understanding of the seas and oceans extends beyond strictly physical and material dimensions; it is also fuelled with the metaphorical and symbolic import of these natural elements. Hester Blum has led recent debates around the reduction of seas and oceans to mere metaphors that encumber them with notions of change, memory and indecisiveness. Her view that "the sea is not a metaphor" and that figurative language has no place in oceanic studies has been met with resistance by scholars who see it as reductive and "somewhat wanting" (Steinberg 156). This book tackles both the material and immaterial aspects of the seas and oceans by focusing on "the material conditions and praxis of the maritime world" (Blum 670) as well as on their more metaphorical and symbolic significance in the arts.

Margaret Cohen, who defines oceans as "wild spaces, ruled by great forces beyond human control" (Cohen 4), reminds readers that oceans have also been reimagined by the creative mind of the poet. The Romantics, for instance, have sublimated the sea, turning it into an extension of our innermost hopes and fears (Cohen 114). The transition from the sea as an obstacle to be overcome in adventure fiction to the sea as a metaphorical expression of the human condition for the Romantic poets realized a poetic desire to aestheticize a seascape that had long been subdued to the more material needs of exploration and mapping. According to Helen M. Rozwadowski, "Romantics celebrated the sea as a transcendent realm beyond progress, civilization, and development. For Romantic artists, the seashore became the ideal place for personal reflection and self-knowledge because of the correspondence between marine and psychological depths" (Rozwadowski 7).

Samuel Taylor Coleridge best illustrates this transcendent realm of the sea in Rime of the Ancient Mariner, first published in the Lyrical Ballads in 1798. The ballad dwells on the mystical and transcendental connection between a sailor and his crew, an albatross and the open sea. The poet's highly alliterative lines never fail to recreate an image of the sea through a poetic language that materializes its evocative power: "The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew, / The furrow followed free: / We were the first that ever burst / Into that silent sea" (Coleridge 257). The romanticizing of the sea lasted well into the 20th century with other prominent academics and poets like W. H. Auden whose study of maritime imagery, The Enchafed Flood or The Romantic Iconography of the Sea, begins with an acknowledgement of Wordsworth's contribution to the Romantic construction of the sea as a site for self-discovery and selfknowledge. When reading various texts that range from the Bible's Book of Genesis to the late 18th- and early 19th-century Romantics, Auden associates the sea with "that state of barbaric vagueness and disorder out of which civilization has emerged and into which, unless saved by the efforts of gods and men, it is always liable to relapse" (Auden 6). This looming threat of relapse

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into a "state of barbaric vagueness" is characteristic of the evocative power of the seas and oceans that often recasts the ship and its crew as allegorical figures of the human condition. Ships and their crews are powerless, reduced to mere prey to the overwhelming power of an anthropomorphized sea of anger and emotion. One of the leading painters of French Romanticism, Théodore Géricault, was celebrated for his *Raft of the Medusa* inspired by the sinking of a frigate off the coast of Morocco in 1816. With not enough lifeboats on the ship for everyone, the crew was forced to devise a raft that would wander the sea for nearly a month. Géricault's painting superbly spans the human condition, tracing a diagonal that orients the spectator's gaze from the dead and the desperate to the strong and the hopeful. In the background, a powerful, stormy sea foregrounds the frailty of the raft and, by extension, the precariousness of human existence.

Not only do oceans stand for the psychological depths of the poet and the contingency of life, but they are used as tropes evoking ever-shifting cultural identities in a world now defined by porous borders and transnationality. For instance, the waves themselves can become metaphors for the complex workings of memory. In her study of 19th- and 20th-century British literature, Gillian Mary Hanson argues that the evocations of the seaside setting "take on the rhythm of the waves themselves, each born upon the retreat of the former, approaching and receding as past is brought into the present" (Hanson 134). Many postcolonial narratives recount at one moment or another an ocean crossing that marks the border between home country and exotic destination, a haunting past and an unforeseeable future. Amitav Ghosh's Ibis Trilogy (Sea of Poppies, River of Smoke, Flood of Fires), Jean Rhys's Wide Sargasso Sea, and Jane Urquhart's Away are just a few examples of how water affects the lives of characters and the writers who write them into being. Crossing an ocean long before the spread of air travel in the second half of the 20th century, often rhymed with irreversible separation from the homeland and the brutality of forced displacement that reached a peak with the history of the slave trade. One cannot but notice that most of the renowned specialists of the Black Atlantic refer at one moment or another to J. M. W. Turner's notorious *Slave Ship* in which the sea is sublimated with a view to filling the spectators with feelings of admiration and dread, thereby encouraging them to reflect upon the pointless existential struggle against suffering and death. While Margaret Cohen argues that the sublimation of the sea results in a "socially constructed ocean, one purged of knowledge that comes from hands-on practice" (Cohen 117), Paul Gilroy, in The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness, writes that Turner's Slave Ship communicates "self-conscious moral power and [...] aims directly for the sublime in its invocation of racial terror, commerce, and England's ethico-political degeneration." It also accentuates the centrality of ships as "the living means by *Introduction* xiii

which the points within that Atlantic world were joined" (Gilroy 16). Gilroy pinpoints the Middle Passage as a central historical period in the rise of Western modernity and its political, economic, and industrial models. The historical significance of this period does not only help to explain and justify the rise of modernity; it also serves to further debunk the imperialist discursive constructions of the Other at work behind the slave trade. In such constructs, the Other was reified and therefore prevented from belonging to a larger, more universal human race. However, despite systemic measures to render slaves Other, the memory of the slave was kept intact and later became essential to the formation of an entire culture.

In this tragic history of the Black Atlantic, the sea functions as a space where memory is recorded and history reconstructed. In her study of Derek Walcott's 1979 poem entitled "'The Sea is History': Transcultural Remembrance of the Black Atlantic," Birgit Neumann focuses on the ambivalence of the sea that "registers memories that have been occluded by the official historical records" and, at the same time, "serves as an emancipating force from 'tribal memories' and respective historical restraints" (Neumann 141). Even though the sea chiefly recalls historical periods of loss and colonial exploitation, narratives of the Middle Passage have unquestionably shaped African-American and Caribbean consciousnesses. They have given rise to new forms of identity that have grown out of the gap between a historical present and a mythical origin.

The aestheticization and sublimation of the sea have served other purposes as well, such as the protection of wildlife and the environment. The publication of extensive studies that examine current environmental issues, including Rachel Carson's Silent Spring (1962) about the disastrous impact of pesticides on the environment and Laurence Buell's The Environmental Imagination (1995) that emphasizes the serious discrepancy between the discourse and action surrounding "the potential gravity of environmental degradation" (Buell 4), is hard proof that the environment has become a major issue for this generation and those to come. In his Writing for an Endangered World, Buell devotes an entire chapter to oceans and the whales that populate them. More specifically, he focuses on the oceanic re-imagination that enabled our perception of the whale, and by extension all marine life, to change from being the monstrous fiend from Melville's Moby Dick to an intelligent mammal in dire need of protection. Many press articles and documentaries now tackle the urgent state of our seas and oceans; they largely discuss unprecedented pollution due to degassing tankers, the seventh continent of plastic circling in the Pacific, progress in sonar systems leading to inevitable fish stock depletion, and similar environmental catastrophes. Because of these immediate dangers, some of which have already become irreversible, environmental studies, ecocriticism, and literary genres that engage with environmental

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concerns are gaining in currency, covering various fields of expertise, from oceanography to literary criticism and practice. All come together to better raise awareness of and a sense of responsibility towards the environment and the waters that sustain it.

This book joins efforts to foster the emergence of a global consciousness by investigating the ways in which the seas and oceans have shaped mentalities, societies, nations, and artistic creations. Its purpose is not to expand on debates surrounding the materiality and physicality of the seas and oceans, but rather to better grasp the many different ways humans interact with them, be it physically or poetically. The articles collected here stem from "Negotiating Waters: Seas, Oceans, and Passageways in the Colonial and Postcolonial Anglophone World," an international conference organized by the CEMRA in 2018, a research group that is now part of the ILCEA4 (Institut des langues et cultures européennes, américaines, asiatiques, africaines et australiennes), that took place at the University of Grenoble Alpes from February 15 to 16, 2018. The conference sought to examine how water has played an important role in forging and reconfiguring cultural identities, spurring stories of reunion and separation, and redefining entire nations. Attracting researchers from around the globe and from various disciplines in the humanities and social sciences, it offered a unique opportunity to consider, compare, contrast, and combine a range of different perspectives and approaches on an issue tackled in literature, cultural studies, and social sciences. The conference initiated a dialogue across disciplines that traces the central role of water in shaping not only lands, but also power structures and identities.

This volume extends the discussion by gathering contributions that analyse diverse literary and historical connections between the oceans and humans in different locations of the English-speaking world, in specifically located places as well as in cross-cultural and migratory circumstances. It is divided into three sections that together trace the human impulse to control, cross, and reimagine water in all its forms: harbors, rivers, seas and oceans. The volume's first section tackles the establishment and management of political, economic, and imperial power over the seas and oceans. The discovery of the New World by Europeans in the late 15th century transformed the oceans into a vast battleground where nations longing to become empires vied for new territories that would be appropriated and objectified with maps. The British, French, and Spanish empires would have long-lasting effects on the historical development of the Americas as they imposed their political and economic practices, let alone their languages, on newly subjugated indigenous peoples. However, imperial control over the oceans is first and foremost a matter of representation insofar as the art and science of cartography enabled empires to claim, objectify, and thereby master newly acquired territories.

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Cartography is one of the main means by which space was controlled. Indeed, mapping, measuring, and renaming entire territories was a process through which imperial centers asserted their knowledge of and mastery over colonial peripheries. In Post-colonial Transformation, Bill Ashcroft aptly makes the connection between the knowledge collected from map-making and imperial power: "Maps emerged as a practical consequence of the monetary and strategic value of geographical knowledge. But, crucially, they represented an ability to see the world as a whole, an ability which amounted to an ability to know the world. It is a [...] special exercise of the power of surveillance" (Ashcroft 128-129). The link between geographical knowledge and power is addressed in the first article of this section, "Negotiating Oceans, Islands, Continents, and British Imperial Ambitions in the Maps of Herman Moll, 1697-1732," in which Alex Zukas shows that British control of the oceans in the late 17th and early 18th centuries depended largely on collecting comprehensive data pertaining to precise island and harbor locations, along with information about trade winds, depth and meteorology. The data collected by rigorous cartographers like Herman Moll helped England gain control of faraway lands by mapping their gold and silver mines and arable lands for possible settlement. Zukas demonstrates how Herman Moll's detailed maps enabled the British to "capture" the world and become an "empire of the deep," proving that "maps are not neutral depictions of the world" but rather representations serving political and economic purposes that would shape modern capitalist societies.

Mapping also serves ideological purposes as argued in Irina Kantarbaeva-Bill's study of 19th-century European attempts to find the source of the Oxus river - now known as the Amu Darya, one of the longest rivers of central Asia which forms part of Afghanistan's northern border – with the aim to unveil the mythical origins of the Indo-European race. Because of its sinuous course, the Oxus river long elided European cartographers, thus managing to withhold its mysteries and secrets. Nonetheless, as Kantarbaeva-Bill demonstrates in "Journeys to the Source of the River Oxus: Victorian Desires, Colonial Texts," the expeditions organized to map the area were important reflections of the explorers' ideological and racial biases. Indeed, the differences that could be seen between the region's many mountain landscapes coincided with the racial differences that would become central to 19-century racialist theories of a natural, hierarchical division of humanity into separate races. In other words, the spatial exploration of the Oxus river suggested quite another expedition, one that meant to locate the traces of an ancient "golden civilization." Kantarbaeva-Bill goes on to show that the apparent lack of scientific and geographical interest in the river at the end of the 19th century was surxvi Introduction

prisingly counterbalanced by poetic endeavors to reimagine and reconstruct the famous myth-inspiring river as the origin of humanity.

The metaphorical import of rivers, seas, and oceans is also central to Caitlin Charman's "'Newfoundland's Robinson Crusoe?': Mobility, Masculinity, and the Failure of Ecological Management in Michael Crummey's Sweetland" in which the management, or rather the mismanagement of the sea subtly deconstructs central tenets of modernity. In her comparative study, she argues that while Robinson Crusoe was culturally constructed as an individualist associated with the rise and expansion of capitalistic modernity in the early 18th century, Michael Crummey's protagonist, Moses Sweetland, who refuses to leave an island off the coast of the Canadian province of Newfoundland also named Sweetland, is maimed by the devastating forces of modernity. Unlike Robinson Crusoe, the "proto-managerial ecologist" who successfully bends the island to his will. Moses Sweetland is emasculated and sterilized through his relationship to the island and the sea that surrounds it. Charman draws on Dean Bavington's Managed Annihilation: An Unnatural History of the Newfoundland Cod Collapse to show how Crummey debunks the myth of the rational management of natural resources as an essential component of capitalist discourse and the ideology of progress. He does so by shifting the reader's attention to the perspective of a fragile and defeated local community that has no other choice but to accept and embrace its diasporic fate.

Diaspora involves the scattering and displacement of peoples, but, as Homi Bhabha writes, it is also a time of gathering, a time when different communities find one another, interact, long for their lost homeland and reassess the past (Bhabha 199-200). Like many other forms of movement and migration such as travel and emigration, diaspora implies crossing seas and oceans and facing danger and uncertainty. In her introduction to an issue of Commonwealth: Essays and Studies entitled "Crossings," Françoise Kral writes that the dynamics of crossing "posits an ontological in-betweenness which is not contextual and transient but permanent" (Kral 5). The three articles that make up the second section of this volume explore waters as interstitial spaces that determine and thereby foreground historical and cultural differences. Jean-Luc Tendil's study of William Bradford's detailed account of his sea voyage across the Atlantic and settlement in New England, known as the History of Plymouth Plantation, shows how religion and ideology shape the settlers' understanding of the ocean and the unknown environment they were about to colonize. In "William Braford's Of Plimoth Plantation: Crossing the Ocean, Travelling between Two Poles of Being," Tendil engages with Bradford's description of a hideous environment with satanic forests to detail how these images have inspired such canonical novels as Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness and Herman Melville's Moby Dick and popular films, including Ste*Introduction* xvii

ven Spielberg's *Jaws* or Robert Zemeckis's *Castaway*, which is yet another version of Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*. For the 17th-century Puritan, crossing the Atlantic became a moment of rebirth and confirmation of his religious faith that would so clearly define the first permanent colony in New England and shape the entire country.

In the early 17th century, fleeing religious persecution was indeed one of the main motives behind emigration and ocean crossing, but over time, crossing the ocean also became synonymous with the religious duty to evangelize foreign communities. The importance of shipboard journeys in the making of missionary identities in the 19th and early 20th century informs Rhonda Semple's contribution, "'Whatever Passes through the Paths of the Sea (Psalm 8:8): Shipboard Liminality and the Sea Voyage as the Crucible of Missionary Identity from the 1820s to the 1920s." Missionaries understood the sea they crossed as a manifestation of God's presence in the world, a conviction that helped solidify their religious fervor and prepare them for the difficulties that lay ahead. Semple traces the way in which the missionaries of the London Missionary and Wesleyan Methodist Missionary societies sought to turn the ship into a sacred space of devotion and religious practice. This "uncontrolled" space of transition between East and West tested and confirmed their religious faith. However, it also manifested the missionaries' will to bend the crew to strict religious observance. Their resolve often led to tensions and even conflict between the ship's crew and the missionaries who refused to see the ship as a heterotopic space that, as Michel Foucault would argue, invites people to question and view their own world from a different angle. As Semple indicates, such a process could not be envisaged when the success of a mission largely depended on the unwavering faith of its missionaries.

On the other hand, contemplating the ocean being crossed also helped travelers apprehend the cultural gap between one's home country and unknown lands. In his examination of travel narratives, Bakhtin explains that one's own homeland "serves as organizing center for the point of view, the scales of comparison, the approaches and evaluations determining how alien countries and cultures are seen and understood" (Bakhtin 103). This perception and understanding of the Other through the prism of one's own homeland and national values is central to Marie Stopes' accounts of her travel to Japan at a time when Japonism was spreading throughout Europe and influencing its artistic and literary production. As a professional botanist and social worker, Stopes kept journals in which she detailed her encounters with her Japanese co-workers and her growing appreciation of Japanese culture. In "Crossing the Sea: Marie Stopes' Expedition to the Northern Wilds of Japan as Expression of Transcontinental Contacts and Cultural Exchange," Marie Géraldine Rademacher examines Stopes' colonial approach to Japanese cul-

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ture and environment. As Japan was forced by the American navy to open its ports to American merchant ships in the middle of the 19th century, the country was inevitably exposed to Western culture, so much so that Japanese society was slowly changing under the influence of Western dress codes and culinary culture. Rademacher contends that Stopes' colonial approach to Japan is ambivalent insofar as she was convinced that exposure to Western culture was a "threat to Japan's exquisite innocence," all the while drawing a traditional, past-oriented and highly romanticized portrait of Japan that tended to ossify Japanese culture and turn the country into a vast museum. In this respect, the Pacific Ocean that kept the West and the Far East culturally and geographically separate and distinct could function as a natural barrier that, at least from Stopes' ideological point of view, limits cultural cross-fertilization and preserves clear-cut, stable identities for the sake of authenticity.

Questioning and destabilizing identity remains a dominant motif in postcolonial fiction, from poetry and novels to more popular forms like comic books and Hollywood films, and water is thus often used as a metaphor for the ever-changing nature of identity because of its shapelessness, adaptability, and fluidity. In her introduction to Shared Waters: Soundings in Postcolonial Literatures, Stella Borg Barthet explains that "the sea's watery stretches resist marking and signposting, urging us to reject walls and margins in nations and disciplines. The sea whispers to us the ultimate unmappability of identity and meaning" (Borg Barthet xi). The first two articles of Negotiating Waters' final section address water as a site for memory, especially its instability. In "Waterways and Ships as Heterotopias of Memory in Caryl Phillips's Narratives," Svetlana Stefanova shows that memory is much more than a cluster of fragmented images from the past. By contrast, it is a dynamic process through which memories, very much like the waves on the surface of the ocean, are always kept in motion. She draws on Michael Rothberg's concept of multidirectional memory and Michel Foucault's concept of heterotopia – that is, specific spaces that reflect our own world and invert it at the same time - to revisit Caryl Phillip's narratives of the Black Atlantic in which the "ocean becomes a space where these memories of 'inconceivable horror' travel and are kept alive." Stefanova's thorough examination of the evershifting nature of memory and the ocean in Phillip's work defines water as a "space of transformation" where collective memory is formed and reformed, sometimes at the margins of historical discourse.

Water as transformative power is also central to Neela Cathelain's article on Amitav Ghosh's trilogy, "The Poetics of Water in Ghosh's Ibis Trilogy." In her contribution, Cathelain focuses on the ambivalent and paradoxical motif of water as a unity that structures Ghosh's trilogy and as a chaotic force that ceaselessly disrupts landscapes and resists "Eurocentric narratives of space

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and time." Gaston Bachelard's essay on water and dreams aids her to show that the ever-changing wetland of Bengal and its lack of definite form reflect an indefinite, uncertain human destiny. In Ghosh's trilogy, water is associated with the flow of history. With its "watery" and "unknowable quality," it is also the flow and "deluge" of language that challenges and unsettles the dominant languages of imperial centers. Suhasini Vincent's article, "Material Ecocriticism: Maritime Trade, Displacement, and the Environment in Amitav Ghosh's Fictional Waterscape," also considers Ghosh's work, but in light of recent ecocritical approaches to literature. Philosopher Henri Lefebvre, who has extensively investigated the question of the social production of space, is wary of the term "environment," defined by him as a "global and unclear concept" because of the different meanings it holds in the sciences (Lefebvre 35-36). Despite the wide acceptance of Lefebvre's theories, such confusion around the term does not thwart efforts by prominent ecocritics like Lawrence Buell to tackle the representations of the natural environment in fiction and non-fiction alike. He invites readers to pay special attention to environmental texts in which the "nonhuman environment is not merely a framing device but [...] a presence that begins to suggest that human history is implicated in natural history" (Buell, Environmental Imagination 7). As an ecocritic, Vincent identifies Ghosh as a writer who is genuinely committed to the environment and who aims to represent and aestheticize the "transient, everchanging and ephemeral nature of the tidal country." Set in the first half of the 19th century during the peak of the opium trade between India and China, she shows that Ghosh's Ibis Trilogy depicts Indian landscapes like the mangrove forests as spaces that are constantly reshaped by the river's ebbs and flows. These landscapes thus chart the palimpsestic history of the survival and resilience of its inhabitants. Vincent's contribution also underscores and shrewdly challenges preconceived notions that major genres like science fiction are best suited to tackle issues of climate change and its dramatic consequences on the environment.

In the final article of this volume, "Negotiating Water in Times of Drought: An Ecocritical Study of Cli-fi Novels Paolo Bacigalupi's *The Water Knife* and Benjamin Percy's *Dead Lands*," Claire Perrin focuses on the new, emergent subcategory of science fiction commonly known as climate fiction, or cli-fi. As Perrin specifies, cli-fi often revolves around climatic catastrophes that have been triggered by an unlimited human exploitation of the environment and its punitive consequences. She opens her discussion with a review of cli-fi and various popular novels that use the environment as a means to entertain the reader with dystopian scenes of bloodbath and apocalyptic destruction. She then turns her attention to two novels, one by Paolo Bacigalupi and the other by Benjamin Percy, that imagine the future battles around the control and

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management of the planet's water resources. She does so to illustrate the slow evolution of the genre from texts that use the environment as an empty background against which plots of catastrophic annihilation unfold to texts that approach the environment as a "presence" and not simply a "framing device" (Buell, *Environmental Imagination* 7). Perrin details how Bacigalupi and Percy's cli-fi narratives attempt to revisit and alter American national narratives by setting them in a posthumous future that encourages readers to reconsider both American national history and imagination from a different perspective. *The Water Knife* and *Dead Lands* join other examples of cli-fi fiction in their invitation to readers to reflect more profoundly on the management of the planet's water resources and interrogate their own assumptions about the validity of their national myths.

Negotiating Waters also includes an interview with Canadian fiction writer Lisa Moore. In it, she reflects on how the North Atlantic has and continues to impact the island of Newfoundland, politically, economically, and culturally. Drawing both from historical knowledge and personal experience, Moore delineates the particular ways in which the literary and visual forms of expression of the island's artists reflect the mystical but powerful force of the ocean's waters and winds.

"Negotiating Waters: Seas, Oceans, and Passageways in the Colonial and Postcolonial Anglophone World" originated from the CEMRA's 2015 to 2020 five-year plan to work on passageways as a means to analyse how cultural identities connect and interact. It is also the first collaborative project between the University of Grenoble Alpes and Memorial University of Newfoundland, two universities that hope to prolong and further develop their partnership in the years to come. The conference and the publication of this volume were made possible thanks to the subsidies received from the University of Grenoble Alpes; especially from the ILCEA4, the scientific council, and the Department of Foreign Languages; the Metropolitan area; and the Maison de la Création (Grenoble), whose representatives the editors would like to thank for their support.

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