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## Book Reviews / Comptes rendus

Ingersoll, Karin A. *Waves of Knowing: A Seascape Epistemology*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016, 204 pages.

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In her first book, *Waves of Knowing: A Seascape Epistemology*, Kanaka Maoli (Native Hawaiian) political scientist, writer and surfer Karin Amimoto Ingersoll offers a significant account of knowing the ocean. This book joins the ranks of a growing number of critical works by Indigenous scholars that lay bare the colonial-epistemological legacy of a still western lived-in world and scholarship. Classified by the publisher within the fields of Hawaiian Studies, Native and Indigenous Studies, and Political Theory, the book offers a conceptual tool for decolonising and creating a new (political and ethical) foundation of knowing that is relevant beyond these disciplines. A well-grounded, expansive and ethnographic account of the sea, it is written in a poetic way that reflects a still widely unrecognised genre of Pacific Islander scholars – for example, Vilsoni Hereniko – who bring together poetic and scholarly writing. In this tradition, Ingersoll – literally – dives right into the introduction with an autoethnographic account of her experiences as Kanaka surf instructor, confronting the realities of a neocolonial surf tourism industry.

The theoretical framework of the book is an “intersection of knowledge systems” (24) that bridges European critical philosophy (Heidegger, Ranciere, Deleuze) and classic work of Pacific, Indigenous and Hawaiian scholars (Hau’ofa, Teaiwa, Kauanui, Kame’eleihiwa). Ingersoll’s intention is to critique this binary, arguing that knowledge can travel and western thought may be hijacked to articulate an Indigenous framework. Seascape epistemology is also reflected in Ingersoll’s methodology, which foregrounds the fluidity of theories, lived realities and identities. Drawing together autoethnographic experiences with oral histories, Hawaiian texts, poetry and artwork, *Waves of Knowing* creates what the author calls a living archive. Through this living archive, Ingersoll not only focuses on the genealogy of chants, songs and stories but combines them with interviews, ethnographic observations and her own oceanic experiences and sensibilities.

The book’s two central concepts are *seascape epistemology* and *oceanic literacy*, with the latter being illustrated along *he’e nalu* (surfing) and *ho’okele* (navigation), as well as, to a

lesser degree, *lawai’a* (fishing and farming). The chapter classification does not follow the more conventional structure of first introducing a concept to then explicate empirical cases – or vice versa, as is more common in anthropological writing. Rather, the book starts with an example of oceanic literacies (*he’e nalu*) in Chapter 1, followed by two chapters on the key concepts: oceanic literacy and seascape epistemology in. Chapter 4 focuses on another form of oceanic literacy, *ho’okele*, while the final chapter presents how seascape epistemology may be implemented in the form of *ka hālau*, a school. Following Ingersoll’s writing tactic of collage, of “gluing the diverse and individual seascapes and sources together” (27), different topics transcend chapter “boundaries,” thus reflecting the fluidity of seascape epistemology.

Chapter 1 provides a critical summary of the surf tourism and film industry’s legacy of framing Hawaiian surf waves as something to ride for leisure, as seen in the popular *Endless Summer* film collection. The “Hawaiian Islands were flooded in a whitewash of idealism” (58) – a legacy that continues in the renaming of famous surf spots for Hawaiian royalty. While the surf tourism industry perpetuates a neocolonial legacy, contemporary Kanaka surfers carve out their own Indigenous identity that, reflective of a seascape epistemology, “rolls in and out of the world’s shores” (77).

Chapter 2 contextualises *he’e nalu* as one form of oceanic literacy – a literacy of applied and embodied knowledge within a seascape epistemology, through which a surfer, navigator or fisher sees, reads, smells, hears, tastes and feels the ocean. It rests on Ranciere’s concept of the distribution of the sensible, where an aesthetic logic remembers through performance; just as sand shifts, so does oceanic literacy (re-)create Hawaiian bodies, minds, land and sea. This logic is beautifully visualised in the bark cloth print *Maka Upena* by Romanchak, which also serves as the book’s cover illustration. The ethics of oceanic literacy rests on, and grows from, a genealogical connection between body and sea, rather than on a rational logic of “knowing” the ocean.

Chapter 3 develops in depth the concept of seascape epistemology, according to which knowledge is fluid, resilient and multifarious, “while maintaining a rooted source of cultural history” (154). Seascape epistemology thus foregrounds both a centre of origin and movement. Ingersoll offers four more concepts in this chapter. *Ocean-body assemblage* conceives of the body as central and moving point in seascape epistemology. *Ontological affectivity* honours both cerebral and embodied sources as equal ways of knowing, such as logic and passion.

*Ontological time* is conceptually the most dense section of the book and describes how one moves daily through different times, such as the capital time in a coffee shop or Indigenous time in the sea. All these simultaneous times intersect with *ontological space* into spatiotemporal constructions that determine notions of identity, while those of the sea disrupt such power structures.

Chapter 4 introduces the oceanic literacy of ho'okele through accounts of Nainoa Thompson, Kanaka navigator of the *Hōkūle'a*. Ingersoll describes, among others through illustrative graphics both Micronesian and Thompson's navigation, which, despite their differences, contend that the Pacific voyager is always at the centre, whereas islands and reefs are mobile. Ingersoll then theorises the ideology of travel as "a set of ethical ideas that create a 'map' of the way in which the world moves according to that particular ideology" (144). She traces early European colonialists' voyaging ideology – among others, James Cook's – that reflect an enlightenment geographical discourse of systematising foreign landscapes and the sea. In contrast, seascape epistemology requires a conception of the centre (that is, the canoe) as moving, just as the map, along Kānaka Maoli ancestors in rain clouds or lightning.

Finally, Chapter 5 offers a poetic call for action to found ka hālau, an education centre and research site for oceanic literacy, picking up on the original vision of many Hawaiian-focused charter schools. Education here combines place- and practice-based approaches, where routine interaction with place provides an inherent education through smelling, hearing, tasting and touching the ocean, as well as through oral and written words. Ingersoll's vision includes tools and knowledges from Kanaka epistemology, ontology and western experiences. This is relevant because contemporary Kanaka youth experience Kanaka or "western" cultural spaces in intersectional ways – just as the ontological times and spaces the author describes. Instead of a conclusion, the book ends with a short epilogue on humanity, recognising that to articulate one's relationships with the ocean, and nature more generally, is deeply human.

This book is suitable for anyone familiar with Kānaka Maoli concepts, the language and Hawaiian Studies literature. One is reminded of Noelani Goodyear-Ka'ōpua's (2013) land-centred literacies or Katrina-Ann Oliveira's (2014) ancestral sense abilities and performative cartographies, and it would have been interesting to learn how seascape epistemology and oceanic literacy relate to (or diverge from) these concepts. Those less familiar with the Hawaiian language will find the book more difficult to read, as it lacks a glossary for the most common Hawaiian words. Yet the reader may find it refreshing that terms like *surfing* turn into *he'e nalu*, conveying in a practical (reading) sense of what a (Hawaiian) seascape epistemology is about. Occasional redundancies (for example, providing definitions of seascape epistemology) in each chapter offer parts of the larger thesis of the book, which may – or may not – make it an easy task for teachers to assign certain chapters for class. The book primarily speaks to philosophers and literarians, while anthropologists will find the open, poetic-ethnographic writing inspiring. The transdisciplinary interest in the book is also reflected in its premise: just as seascape epistemology has a core while open to change, the book has a core in Hawaiian Studies while permeating other disciplines – and epistemologies.

## References

- Goodyear-Ka'ōpua, Noelani J. 2013. *The Seeds We Planted: Portraits of a Native Hawaiian Charter School*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Oliveira, Katrina-Ann. 2014. *Ancestral Places: Understanding Kanaka Geographies*. Corvallis: Oregon State University Press.

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Drew, Georgina. *River Dialogues: Hindu Faith and the Political Ecology of Dams on the Sacred Ganga*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2017, 264 pages.

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When King Bhagirath had done penance in the Himalayas for countless years, the goddess Ganga descended to earth, following the king from the mountains all the way to the Bay of Bengal, where her water blessed the ashes of the king's sixty thousand great uncles, who were finally freed from their curse. Since then, the goddess has continued to bless the people along the banks of the River Ganga, her physical form on earth.

Most people in Georgina Drew's book *River Dialogues* agree on this story. However, the story's implications for current affairs are more ambiguous. Set in the Garhwal region of Uttarakhand, in the Indian Himalayas, this nuanced ethnography discusses the shifting activist stances regarding hydro-power developments on the "main" tributary of the River Ganga, named after King Bhagirath. Working mostly with female activists, Drew describes a shift in their positions vis-à-vis hydro-power dams – from unconditional rejection at the time the hydro-power companies began construction on the dams to a more compromising stance once the construction had been stopped and the area had been declared an "ecozone." Drew's material suggests that Garhwali women are not so much defending a river as they are struggling to maintain meaningful lives, which include viable and dignified livelihoods and a stake in the decisions affecting the economic development of their region. Ganga – as river, mother and goddess – serves as an important idiom for embodying and voicing these concerns.

Drew makes clear that there is no single Garhwali movement for or against dam building in the area. Instead, her ethnography portrays various groups at different scales, which occasionally seem to bond strategically to further their projects. Scale is a key topic in her analysis, with recurrent tension between the region and the nation, the tributary and the catchment, and local traditions and generalised religion. In their discussions on the region's infrastructural development and environmental conservation, Garhwali women find themselves systematically marginalised by male experts from the Indian plains. It is certainly useful for activists that the Ganga is considered a "national river" that represents the "culture of India," as this translates their concerns into an idiom that is plausible to a wider constituency. Simultaneously, however, this larger frame of reference erases the specificity of their particular motivations and worries. Is the conflict about the Ganga as an entire river, or is it about specific sites of worship and other everyday uses along a Bhagirathi tributary? And are the