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# Introduction: Conceptualizing Archipelagic Mobilities

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This special forum of *JTAS* brings together the work of international scholars from the fields of archipelagic American studies, island studies, and mobility studies. It is the result of two thematic workshops in Leipzig, Germany organized by the collaborative research center “Spatialization Processes under the Global Condition” and the Vienna research platform “Mobile Cultures and Societies” that set out to investigate the relationship between transnational studies, archipelagic studies, and mobility studies. In seven articles, an interview, and an exploratory conversation, the twelve contributors open up and navigate new paths of thinking through the intersections of archipelagicity, mobility, US-American imperialism, and decoloniality. As part of a rising tide of critical voices that express discontent about global neoliberal regimes of im/mobility and their representation, the contributors concurrently identify and answer to contemporary needs of renegotiating spaces, places, identities, and power relations. Archipelagic epistemes, the authors demonstrate across a diverse range of topics, provide a lens through which to critically interrogate traditional binaries of continentalism and islandness. They challenge colonial discourses of static, self-contained islands and bring into focus the role of im/mobilities and relational entanglements.

As Édouard Glissant noted in his conversations with Hans Ulrich Obrist, archipelagos “are spaces of relation that recognize all the infinite details of the real. ... They open us up to a sea of wandering: to ambiguity, to fragility, to drifting.”<sup>1</sup> The contributions to this special forum operate within that “sea of wandering” as they open into and move across varied literal and figurative archipelagos; they demonstrate how transnational imaginaries and discourses become part of archipelagic formations, both in contexts of imperialism and resistance to its dominant epistemes. Significantly, arch-

ipelagic thought has considerably shaped critical engagement with transnational American studies in recent years (see, e.g., the *JTAS* special forums on “Archipelagoes/Oceans/Visuality,” 2019, and on “American Territorialities,” 2020), stirring important debates surrounding territoriality and power and challenging binaries such as those between island and continent in order to reconceptualize the Americas as part of wider networks of islands, archipelagos, and oceans. By bringing archipelagic American studies into dialogue with mobility studies perspectives, we hope to further sharpen its potential to question hegemonic concepts of the United States as continental, central, and static in its national boundaries.

The intersections of archipelagicity, mobility, and US-American imperialism illuminate obscured dimensions of transnational im/mobility and colonialism in a framework that goes beyond conventional approaches by embracing what Brian Russell Roberts and Michelle Ann Stephens describe as a healthy “skepticism regarding continental presumptions to uniquely *mainland* status, combined with a dedication to the project of reimagining insular, oceanic, and archipelagic spaces as *mainlands* and *mainwaters*, crucial spaces, as participants, nodes, and networks within planetary history.”<sup>2</sup> Departing from this readjusted outlook, we explore how archipelagic thinking—or “thinking with the archipelago”<sup>3</sup>—enables us to recalibrate our knowledge, comprehension, and sensitivities concerning submerged and unexpected sociocultural archipelagic entanglements that are themselves mobile formations across the Americas.

How, the contributions to this special forum ask, does an archipelagic approach shift our viewpoint, scope, and sense of scale of spaces, places, and human identities in a globalized and transnational world? How can concepts such as archipelagicity, insularity, and peripherality make visible continuities between geographically remote places concerning colonial violence, racial hierarchies, and differential im/mobilities, for instance across the Caribbean, Oceania, and even outer space? How does a focus on archipelagic im/mobilities challenge territorial spatial formats such as region, nation-state, and empire, and which new spatial imaginations emerge from the engagement with archipelagic epistemes and mobility discourses, representations, and practices? And, finally, how can practitioners of transnational American studies operationalize and translate archipelagic thinking into sustainable and approachable scholarly praxes?

In his book *Imperial Archipelago*, Lanny Thompson argues that the overseas territories colonized by the United States constitute an archipelago because many of these territories are islands, and because all of them have been under the control of the US, even if there was relatively little contact between them.<sup>4</sup> More recently, Thompson has described archipelagos as “spatial and historical formations, assembled, reconfigured, and shaped largely by imperial, colonial, and postcolonial processes.”<sup>5</sup> The field of archipelagic American studies has further developed the concept of archipelagicity, approaching it as a blend of physical and imagined spaces by proposing that “the archipelago emerges as neither strictly natural nor as wholly cultural but always as at the intersection of the Earth’s materiality and humans’ penchant

for metaphoricity.”<sup>6</sup> Thinking archipelagically therefore becomes both a metaphor and a theoretical lens for accessing the multiple dimensions of what Elizabeth DeLoughrey calls a “transoceanic imaginary.”<sup>7</sup> Archipelagic Studies interrogates the continental characterization of the US and calls for a decontinentalization of American studies with the purpose of making other geographical figurations visible, especially marginalized metageographies and “peripheral” spaces that have been neglected so far.<sup>8</sup>

In its endeavor to critically interrogate the contingency of the geographical forms and cultural constructions of continents, islands, and oceans, archipelagic American studies draws on earlier critical investigations of continental thinking in the fields of Caribbean, ocean, and island studies.<sup>9</sup> It continues exploring what Martin W. Lewis and Kären Wigen in their 1997 study of geographical imaginations have called the “myth of continents”<sup>10</sup> by questioning conventional patterns of global place-making. Historian John R. Gillis has pointed to the fact that during the Renaissance, Europeans began to perceive the world archipelagically, thinking of the Americas as islands.<sup>11</sup> And Martin Brückner reminds us that it took until the mid-eighteenth century before the idea of an American continent began to emerge. Before that, “North America was represented as a fragmented, elusive territory.”<sup>12</sup> Published at the beginning of the American Revolution, Thomas Paine’s well-known proclamation, in *Common Sense*, that there was something absurd “in supposing a continent to be perpetually governed by an island”<sup>13</sup> reveals the strategic use of America’s status as a continent and highlights the hierarchy of continents over islands established by then. Throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, US expansionism resulted in the annexation, temporary control, or administration of a multitude of islands, among them Hawai’i, Guam, Puerto Rico, Cuba, the Philippines, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic. If we add the network of US American military bases and embassies across the globe, then the map “more truly reflects America’s global archipelago.”<sup>14</sup>

Transnational American studies, from its early focus on migration and diaspora studies and its (much belated) inclusion of US-Mexican (and later also US-Canadian) border studies in the 1990s to its transatlantic, transpacific, hemispheric, and finally global “turns” has constantly widened its geographic scope (a fact that has evoked much critique as repeating US expansionism on an academic level).<sup>15</sup> While this series of turns suggests an understanding of archipelagic American studies as merely the latest iteration of an ongoing geographic expansion, archipelagic studies builds on important scholarship in transnational American studies and yet proposes a more radical revision of conventional geographical imaginations by striving, as Brian Russell Roberts emphasizes, for a decentralized perspective on the United States “as an archipelagic and oceanic nation-state,” or, in short, “the Archipelagic States of America.”<sup>16</sup>

This is a consequential reconceptualization as it implies a different view of the insular form—not as an isolated and disparate entity attached to a continent, but as entangled and relational. An archipelago, as scholars in the field remind us, is a terraqueous complex constituted heuristically by active human intervention,<sup>17</sup> as well

as by the waters that surround it and that connect it to other islands. Thinking archipelagically, then, means departing from a view of larger landmasses as “central” and islands as “peripheral” to a view “where no point is the central frame of reference.”<sup>18</sup> Imagining the United States as an archipelago reveals more than the “histories of continental and overseas expansion, conquest, conflict, and resistance” that have shaped the cultures of United States imperialism.<sup>19</sup> It also reveals, as Elaine Stratford observes, how “boundaries shift like imperial fortunes and tides,” leaving the impression of a “confetti of empire” that few people have been able to keep track of.<sup>20</sup> Archipelagic approaches thus evoke epistemic disruptions of global conditions and a renegotiation of conventional cultural vocabularies that revolve around centrality and peripherality, identity, history, geography, and im/mobility, provoking research that interrogates the dominance of continental frameworks.<sup>21</sup>

From a mobility studies perspective, the archipelago has emerged as a mobile reconfiguration of often fixed and rigid epistemes; it comes into existence and persists (and resists) through multiple mobilities. This special forum thus mobilizes archipelagic thinking to explore how imaginaries, representations, discourses, and cultural practices of the transnational are reconfigured across sometimes overlapping archipelagos—from Oceania to outer space—through diverse mobilities. Black and Indigenous writers and theorists have long engaged with imaginations of mobility, moving across archipelagos that are not enclosed in binary ways of perceiving the world. One such image that recurred throughout discussions in our writing workshops and interviews was what Roberts and Stephens, in their conversation in this special forum, call an “anti-explorer’s method” in reference to Derek Walcott’s work:<sup>22</sup> a form of movement across the archipelago which is anti-imperial and which can be likened to Glissant’s figure of the beach walker who “is making sense of the beach,” a sort of archipelagic or oceanic flaneur.<sup>23</sup> This movement is not teleological and linear but “with no goal or end or recommencing.”<sup>24</sup> In the past years, archipelagicity has rapidly emerged as a useful decolonial and anti-imperial framework to (re)conceptualize transnational space, an argument that is reoccurring in various articles in this special forum. We therefore believe that a combined focus on archipelagic as well as mobility studies offers a valuable contribution to the debates in this field.

Since John Urry and Mimi Sheller’s proclamation of the “new mobilities paradigm” in 2006,<sup>25</sup> based on their observation of the constitutionality of increasingly diverse forms of mobility and immobility for Western modernity, mobility studies have formed an interdisciplinary academic field of study, not only within cultural geography and sociology but also across the humanities. Peter Merriman and Lynne Pearce, for instance, highlight the influence of the “mobilities turn” on the humanities and the arts by invoking rich philosophical, cultural, and literary traditions concerned with mobilities.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, mobility studies theorists such as Stephen Greenblatt,<sup>27</sup> David Morley,<sup>28</sup> and Tim Cresswell<sup>29</sup> argue for a historicization of im/mobilities to illustrate that specific im/mobilities indeed have a cultural and sociopolitical history. As an interdisciplinary special forum, the essays in this journal take up such critical calls by

engaging with themes of im/mobility in their respective primary materials. They also outline theorizations of movement evoked in archipelagic contexts, places, and times, ranging from Caribbean philosophy to transnational Pacific studies. Finally, they frequently reflect on the temporal dimensions of im/mobilities from colonial to neocolonial and emergent forms, tendencies, and movements.

While the study of intense forms of movement and migration is nothing new, the “mobilities turn” asks us to zoom in on various im/mobilities that are often complex and entangled, and hence easily go unnoticed or are obfuscated. As Greenblatt famously maintains, “mobility studies should shed light on hidden as well as conspicuous movements of peoples, objects, images, texts, and ideas.”<sup>30</sup> A mobility studies lens specifically focuses on such diverse mobilities as well as immobilities, which bring to the fore intricate and uneven power relations. Various scholars have noted that questions as to who has the right to move and who does not are highly political. In this vein, Nina Glick Schiller and Noel B. Salazar offer a framework that relies on “regimes of mobility” to describe structures which enable or disable movement.<sup>31</sup> Cresswell speaks of a “politics of im/mobility,” outlining different forms of im/mobility that are to a large degree implicated “in the production and distribution of power.”<sup>32</sup> Sheller shares this concern in her recent book *Mobility Justice*, which considers elitist and precarious im/mobilities against the backdrop of histories of slavery, colonialism, and patriarchy.<sup>33</sup> Both mobilities and immobilities necessarily need to be addressed when considering critical questions regarding a right to move as well as a right *not* to move. Recently, scholars in the field of mobility studies have thus increasingly paid attention to immobilities in order to avoid a “mobility bias.”<sup>34</sup>

In order to make sense of such a broad term like mobility, highlighting its relationality is of crucial importance. It goes without saying that mobility does not occur in a social, cultural, or political vacuum; rather, it is socio-politically and culturally produced, and in turn produces socio-cultural relations itself, which need to be investigated from a sex/gender-, race-, class-, or nation-critical angle.<sup>35</sup> “Uneven mobilities” can be critically examined when considering both mobilities and immobilities as unequally distributed and codependent.<sup>36</sup> As Peter Adey writes, “mobility and immobility are profoundly relational and experiential. ... while everything might be mobile, mobilities are very different, and they also relate and interact with one another in many different ways. This relatedness impacts upon what mobilities mean and how they work.”<sup>37</sup> Mobility studies is thus never just about actual movement as such, but about relations produced through movement or stasis, in both geographical and cultural terms. In sum, both mobility studies and archipelagic studies share a profound concern with *relations*: first, by making them visible in their various historical contexts and, second, by showing how they oscillate across a spectrum rather than being fixed in binary terms.

In the context of transnational American Studies, the idea of the nation-state as a bounded entity is fundamentally challenged through a focus on im/mobilities. Such a focus transcends national borders analytically while also acknowledging the very

real, unequal, and oppressive implications that come along with national affiliations and (a lack of) citizenship. New mobility research sets out to critique dominant scripts of US American mobility (such as the frontier or manifest destiny paradigms) which are articulated in cultural forms from sub- and transnational perspectives.<sup>38</sup> It traces im/mobilities as part of human and cultural geographies, for instance as part of diasporas, border regimes and borderlands,<sup>39</sup> migration flows, regimes of mass incarceration, the racial politics of movement,<sup>40</sup> or alongside asymmetrical constellations of contagion or panic.<sup>41</sup>

As part of an archipelagic framework, such a research focus illustrates connections through movement, countering colonial and imperial narratives of colonized places—specifically islands—as distant and contained<sup>42</sup> by focusing on mobile connections between assumed centers and peripheries: “The mobilities paradigm,” as Sheller and Urry note, “emphasizes that all places are tied into at least thin networks of connections that stretch beyond each such place and mean that nowhere can be an ‘island.’”<sup>43</sup> In other words, there is no such thing as an untouched island as both colonial and neofeudal narratives of islands as isolated would have it. Conversely, any island is inevitably part of something else: other islands, archipelagos, and continents, all encompassed by and connected through oceans and oceanic trajectories, and implicated in larger power relations. As Sheller writes in *Island Futures*: “Islands may appear to be contained spaces par excellence, bounded by water on all sides; yet at the same time islanders dwell thanks to many different kinds of coming and going, pausing and waiting, producing a choreography of uneven spatialities and temporalities ... We need, therefore, to recognize the changing im/mobilities and infrastructures that connect across islands, as well as divide them, to form uneven transnational spaces.”<sup>44</sup>

Archipelagic thought as it was first described by Glissant is necessarily concerned with mobility as it requires movement and openness, in opposition to what Glissant terms “continental thought,” which he associates with rigidity and fixity as it “makes us think that we see the world as a bloc, taken wholesale, all-at-once, as a sort of imposing synthesis.”<sup>45</sup> In a similar vein, the archipelago has been mobilized by Pacific writers (see, e.g., Epeli Hau’ofa’s or Craig Santos Perez’s work, to name only two). Archipelagic thought, then, mobilizes rigid blocs and expands them into webs of relation that fundamentally rely on movement. Of course, Glissant’s archipelagic thought as well as Pacific islanders’ emphasis on movement have been expressed against the backdrop of colonialism, its island-rhetoric highlighting island immobility and dependency to justify exploitation.<sup>46</sup> As such, archipelagic thought and its core reliance on mobility is both anti-colonial and anti-imperial. Vicente M. Diaz, for example, focuses on different modes and means of movement to perform an “archipelagic rethinking” and “re-mapping of indigeneity” by discussing navigational practices in the Pacific. According to Diaz, charting islands as mobile places and mobile points of connections can figure as a form of “anti-colonial recovery.”<sup>47</sup>

With this special forum, we propose that thinking together transnational American studies, archipelagic studies, and mobility studies provides a critique of dominant conceptions of US American im/mobilities that are inherently continental, imperially framed, and mythologically “frozen.”<sup>48</sup> Our issue emerges from the vibrant academic currents outlined above, which have become central to further theorizations of transnational perspectives. Putting the two major strands of mobility studies and archipelagic thought in transnational conversation, this special forum asks how relations across the Americas and beyond might be considered anew through archipelagic movements and mobilities.

Covering a broad spectrum of themes and topics, what unites the contributions to this special forum is their desire to (re)think the archipelagic through their areas of interest in terms of openness, creativity, diversity, and relationality. In this endeavor, they operationalize the concept of the archipelago beyond the realm of geography—although spatial dimensions remain important even for more metaphorically-driven forays into archipelagic thinking. The archipelago, the contributions demonstrate, is indeed “a world of many worlds”<sup>49</sup> that brings into dialogue diverse subjects and methods in the same way that it brings to the surface epistemological and methodological patterns, waves, and flows, both emerging and still submerged. In brief, archipelagic thinking offers an epistemic framework through which imaginations of spaces and the lives of people in them can be brought into academic conversations that go beyond conventional spatial formats such as territories and nation-states. In theory and praxis, it calls for ambiguity and embraces the drifting-apart of monolithic conceptions of places and identities because, as Glissant noted: “To unify means to dissolve.”<sup>50</sup>

The forum opens with an exploratory conversation between **Brian Russell Roberts** and **Michelle Ann Stephens**,<sup>51</sup> authors of the groundbreaking collection *Archipelagic American Studies* (2017), one of the foundational books in the field. In an inspiring talk, they unpack the key themes, tropes, and trajectories that inform archipelagic thinking and spaces, imperial mobilities, the intersections between archipelagic and mobilities studies, the complications of mainland/island dichotomies, as well as “minor” traditions. In doing so, Roberts and Stephens both deconstruct and expand the notion of the insular and the island as historical, discursive, ontological, and epistemological objects. They moreover discuss watery borders and borderwaters as natural and cultural key concepts of an archipelagically oriented mobility studies. Following this opening conversation, the first three articles investigate archipelagic mobilities in both a literal and metaphorical sense, as a methodological cue for developing new approaches towards transnational objects of study, from literary translation to mapmaking contexts.

First, **Brian Russell Roberts**’s “Archipelagic Translation: Mobility amid Every Language in the World” invokes the Martinican philosopher Édouard Glissant and Pacific Island scholars and poets Alice Te Punga-Somerville and Craig Santos Perez in thinking about translation, mobility, and archipelagic thought as intertwined. Investigating the



little explored convergences between archipelagic relationalities among islands, oceans, and coasts and the metaphors of translation as over-water transit, bridging or ferrying across waters, the essay works towards a conceptualization of archipelagic translation that frames translation as happening not only between two languages but amid all languages. This amidness is exemplified in a discussion of Craig Santos Perez's poetry, in particular of the poem "aerial roots" that Russell Roberts reads as an "embodiment" of archipelagic translation.

Next, **Steffen Wöll's** contribution "Unmasking Maps, Unmaking Empire: Towards an Archipelagic Cartography" unpacks connections and interactions between place-making, meaning-making, storytelling, and (mental) mapmaking. The essay critically analyzes narrative structures in the realms of spatial imaginations, human geographies, and transnational cartographic practices, tracing both colonial and anticolonial discursive nodes across oceanic circuits. Suggesting a methodological turn in how we think about (mental) mapping and the agency of maps, the essay applies the archipelagic lens to an exploratory spectrum of place-making processes and cultural geographies. Wöll's analyses range from conspicuous cartographies of the US cruise ship industry and its advertisements of Hawai'ian tours to a re-vision of Micronesian stick charts, their surprising accuracy and affinities with European mapping traditions as well as present-day wave field models driven by big-data algorithms. An archipelagic cartography, the essay proposes, opens new venues for the critical reconceptualization of geographic imaginaries and identities of islands, mainlands, centers, peripheries, colonial histories, and transnational futures.

Mapmaking and archipelagic im/mobilities are also central concepts in **Nicole Waller's** contribution. In "Layered Maps: Carceral and Fugitive Archipelagos in Walter Mosley's *Down the River Unto the Sea*," she addresses the archipelagic in African American literature through a reading of Mosley's detective novel. The essay frames the archipelagic not primarily through the tension between the bounded and the relational, but between immobility/incarceration and mobility—often the beginning of a transformative process of place-making. Building on the work of Katherine McKittrick, Waller traces practices of mapping in the novel which negotiate both an imperial national map that serves to enslave, incarcerate, and immobilize Black people, and another layer—*island and ocean spaces that enable the movement of the protagonists.*

Following these critical reflections on a mobile archipelagicity's potential as a transnational methodology, the next set of essays zooms in on the Caribbean archipelago in a broader sense, extending it across national borders towards Panama, the United States, and Canada. In "Narrating the Isthmus: Mobilities and Archipelagic Memory in Texts about the Panama Canal," **Gabriele Pizarz-Ramirez** uses an archipelagic lens to explore mobilities and relationalities in writings about the Panama Canal zone. She discusses the different and contradictory discourses of im/mobility surrounding the canal, with a focus on underlying hydro-colonial structures, by exploring an account that dramatizes the canal as a site of progress and tourist

mobility (Willis J. Abbot's *Panama and the Canal in Picture and Prose*, 1913), as well as texts that address the im/mobilities of those who built the canal (Eric Walrond's *Tropic Death*, 1926), and a bilingual prose-poetry history of Black West Indians in Panama (*An Old Woman Remembers* by Carlos E. Russell, 1995). These texts evoke an archive of submerged historical experiences and the spectral presences of those who died as a result of the violence inherent in the canal project. The contribution brings into view the metageography between Panama and the Caribbean islands, the mobilities between these spaces, and the ocean as a site for the imperial uses of water.

Turning to Caribbean music and dance, **Mimi Sheller** and **Andrew R. Martin** discuss the entwining of cultural tourism with American empire and its transoceanic mobilities in their contribution "AlterNative-Archipelagos and the 1952 Caribbean Festival: Musical Mobilities Escaping ALCOA's Extractive Tourism." They focus on the first Caribbean Festival, held in Puerto Rico in 1952, which was sponsored by the Caribbean Tourism Association and heavily promoted the Caribbean cruises of the mining company ALCOA (Aluminum Corporation of America). The festival was premised on mobilities both as simulacra of discovery (echoing past imperial adventures) and as embodied in dance. Sheller and Martin offer a close reading of the Caribbean Festival program, along with sound recordings and illustrations produced for ALCOA, but also consider the travel of musicians and performers, as well as connections of imperial production and consumption built musically across the archipelago.

The final essay in this cluster, **Barbara Gfoellner** and **Sigrid Thomsen's** "'Near enough to smell and far enough to desire': Archipelagos of Desire in Canisia Lubrin's *Voodoo Hypothesis* and Dionne Brand's *In Another Place, Not Here*," studies these literary works as exemplary for drawing archipelagic interconnections between the Caribbean and Canada. Putting Brand's 1996 novel in conversation with Lubrin's 2017 poetry collection, they argue, opens up ways to explore archipelagic spaces informed by lived and imagined im/mobilities across different literary genres. These im/mobilities shape questions of queer diasporic belonging and memory, conceptualized as "archipelagos of desire" in this paper: in a geographical sense, this kind of desire spans across archipelagos, rather than nations; in a metaphorical sense, the desire expressed in the texts is strikingly informed by archipelagic imagery.

The special forum's final contributions extend archipelagic thought to three different types of transnational spaces: the virtual, the cosmic, and the abyssal. First, in "A Sea of Stars? Towards an Astropelagic Reading of Outer Space with Jacques Lacan and Hannah Arendt," **Alexandra Ganser** and **Jens Temmen** (together with **Clemens Rettenbacher**) take the critical lens provided by archipelagic mobilities to investigate territorializing discourses with regard to the cosmos. Starting from the fact that the International Outer Space Treaty has been modeled on international laws of the seas, the essay enquires into the epistemic consequences of conceiving outer space archipelagically and, following Craig Santos Perez, terripelagically. By reversing center/periphery structururations in line with both archipelagic discourses and philosophical theorizations of outer space by Lacan and Arendt, it critiques the

transformative imaginaries that render other planets desirable territories of capitalization and imperialism through a reading of the initiative “For All Moonkind” and the TV series *For All Mankind*.

Finally, in an interview titled “The Americas: A Relational or Abyssal Geography?” **Barbara Gfoellner** and **Jonathan Pugh** explore archipelagic thinking, transnational American studies, and islandness alongside recent debates in Black studies. They discuss the relational and ontological turns in the humanities, involving a turn towards tropes such as assemblage, network, flow, mobilities, post- and more-than-human approaches, as well as what Pugh (with David Chandler) calls “abyssal thought”: a challenge to the relational and ontological turns which does not provide an alternative to modernity as such but works through notions of suspension and refusal of established notions of the world and the human. Emphasizing the anti-ontological and nonrelational, the abyssal revolves around the refusal of the violence of modern/ontological world-making. Rather than providing a dismissal of relational thinking, however, the contribution suggests a critique that draws attention to its limitations.

In sum, this special forum thinks together mobility studies and archipelagic studies in different literary, cultural, and historical contexts. It explores how thinking with the archipelago shapes the production of knowledge and exposes continuities between continental and extracontinental spaces, particularly concerning colonial violence, racial hierarchies, and differential mobilities. We hope to demonstrate how mobilities challenge spatial formats that are based on principles of territoriality, most notably concepts of region, nation-state, and empire and to draw out new spatial imaginations which emerge from archipelagic epistemes. Last but not least, we would like to thank a number of people and organizations whose astute work and gracious support have made this special forum possible. We thank our peer reviewers for their critical commentary, Ute Rietdorf and Rüdiger Lauberbach of SFB 1199 (University of Leipzig) for helping with the logistics of two workshops funded by the DFG, the research platform “Mobile Cultures and Societies” and the FWF *doc.funds* DOC56-G30 “Cultural Mobility Studies” at the University of Vienna, Philipp Clausberg and Eléonore Tarla for their support in copyediting, and the editorial team at *JTAS*, especially Pia Wiegink.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Hans Ulrich Obrist and Édouard Glissant, *The Archipelago Conversations* (New York: Isolarii, 2021), 20–21.
- <sup>2</sup> Brian Russell Roberts and Michelle Ann Stephens, “Archipelagic American Studies: Decontinentalizing the Study of American Cultures,” in *Archipelagic American Studies*:

*Decontaminating the Study of American Culture*, ed. Brian Russell Roberts and Michelle Ann Stephens (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017), 14; emphases original.

- <sup>3</sup> Jonathan Pugh, “Island Movements: Thinking with the Archipelago,” *Island Studies Journal* 8, no. 1 (2013): 9–24.
- <sup>4</sup> Lanny Thompson, *Imperial Archipelago: Representation and Rule in the Insular Territories under U.S. Domination after 1898* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2010).
- <sup>5</sup> Lanny Thompson, “The Chronotopes of Archipelagic Thinking: Glissant and the Narrative of Philosophy,” in *Contemporary Archipelagic Thinking: Toward New Comparative Methodologies and Disciplinary Formations*, ed. Michelle Stephens and Yolanda Martínez-San Miguel (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2020), 109.
- <sup>6</sup> Roberts and Stephens, “Archipelagic American Studies,” 7.
- <sup>7</sup> Elizabeth M. DeLoughrey, *Routes and Roots: Navigating Caribbean and Pacific Island Literatures* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2007), 4.
- <sup>8</sup> Michelle Stephens and Yolanda Martínez-San Miguel, “‘Isolated Above, but Connected Below’: Toward New, Global, Archipelagic Linkages,” in *Contemporary Archipelagic Thinking: Toward New Comparative Methodologies and Disciplinary Formations*, ed. Michelle Stephens and Yolanda Martínez-San Miguel (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2020), 20.
- <sup>9</sup> See Édouard Glissant, *Poetics of Relation*, trans. Betsy Wing (Detroit: University of Michigan Press, 1997); Édouard Glissant, *Traité du tout-monde* (Paris: Gallimard, 1997); Édouard Glissant, *Une nouvelle région du monde: Esthétique I* (Paris: Gallimard, 2006); Édouard Glissant, *Introduction à une poétique du divers* (Paris: Gallimard, 1996); Antonio Benítez-Rojo, *The Repeating Island: The Caribbean and the Postmodern Perspective* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996); Epeli Hau‘ofa, “Our Sea of Islands,” in *A New Oceania: Rediscovering Our Sea of Islands*, ed. Eric Waddell, Vijay Naidu, and Epeli Hau‘ofa (Suva, Fiji: University of the South Pacific, 1993), 2–16; Elizabeth DeLoughrey, *Routes and Roots: Navigating Caribbean and Pacific Island Literatures* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2007); Godfrey Baldacchino, *A World of Islands: An Island Studies Reader* (Charlottetown, Canada and Luqa, Malta: Institute of Island Studies, University of Prince Edward Island and Agenda Academic, 2007); Teresia Teaiwa, “To Island,” *Mana Moana Collective*, <https://www.manamoana.co.nz/artwork/to-island/>; Lisa Lowe, *The Intimacies of Four Continents* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015).
- <sup>10</sup> Kären Wigen and Martin W. Lewis, *The Myth of Continents: A Critique of Metageography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

- <sup>11</sup> John R. Gillis, “Islands in the Making of an Atlantic Oceania, 1500–1800,” in *Seascapes: Maritime Histories, Littoral Cultures, and Transoceanic Exchanges*, ed. Jerry H. Bentley, Renate Bridenthal, and Kären Wigen (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2007), 25.
- <sup>12</sup> Martin Brückner, *The Geographic Revolution in Early America: Maps, Literacy, and National Identity* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 80.
- <sup>13</sup> Thomas Paine, “Common Sense,” in *Rights of Man, Common Sense and Other Political Writings*, ed. Mark Philip (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 27.
- <sup>14</sup> Craig Santos Perez, “Transterritorial Currents and the Imperial Terripelago,” *American Quarterly* 67, no. 3 (2015): 619, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43823224>.
- <sup>15</sup> See, e.g., the response to Shelley Fisher Fishkin’s presidential address at the American Studies Association conference, in which she proclaimed the transnational turn, by Winfried Fluck; “Inside and Outside: What Kind of Knowledge Do We Need? A Response to the Presidential Address,” *American Quarterly* 59, no. 1 (2007): 23–32; Sophia A. McClennen, “Inter-American Studies or Imperial American Studies?” *Comparative American Studies* 3, no. 4 (2005): 393–413, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1477570005058954>. See also Frank Kelleter, “Transnationalism: The American Challenge,” *Review of International American Studies* 2, no. 3 (2007): 29–34; and Heinz Ickstadt, “American Studies in an Age of Globalization,” *American Quarterly* 54, no. 4 (2002): 543–62.
- <sup>16</sup> Brian Russell Roberts, *Borderwaters: Amid the Archipelagic States of America* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2021), 37; emphasis original.
- <sup>17</sup> Roberts, *Borderwaters*, 16.
- <sup>18</sup> Roberts, *Borderwaters*, 223.
- <sup>19</sup> Elaine Stratford, “Imagining the Archipelago,” in *Archipelagic American Studies: Decontinentalizing the Study of American Culture*, ed. Brian Russell Roberts and Michelle Ann Stephens (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017), 80; and Amy Kaplan and Donald E. Pease, *Cultures of United States Imperialism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1994).
- <sup>20</sup> Stratford, “Imagining the Archipelago,” 80.
- <sup>21</sup> Stephens and Martínez-San Miguel, ““Isolated Above,”” 20.
- <sup>22</sup> Roberts and Stephens, “Archipelagic American Studies,” 20–21. Walcott speaks of “[t]he opposite method to the explorer’s.” See Derek Walcott, “Isla Incognita,” in *Caribbean Literature and the Environment: Between Nature and Culture*, ed. Elizabeth DeLoughrey, Renée K. Gosson, and George B. Handley (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2005), 52.

- <sup>23</sup> Glissant, *Poetics of Relation*, 120.
- <sup>24</sup> Glissant, *Poetics of Relation*, 208.
- <sup>25</sup> Mimi Sheller and John Urry, "The New Mobilities Paradigm," *Environment and Planning* 38, no. 2 (2006): 207–26.
- <sup>26</sup> Peter Merriman and Lynne Pearce, "Mobility and the Humanities," *Mobilities* 12, no. 4 (2017): 493–508.
- <sup>27</sup> Stephen Greenblatt, ed., *Cultural Mobility: A Manifesto* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).
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- <sup>30</sup> Stephen Greenblatt, "A Mobility Studies Manifesto," in *Cultural Mobility: A Manifesto*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 250.
- <sup>31</sup> Nina Glick Schiller and Noel B. Salazar, "Regimes of Mobility Across the Globe," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 39, no. 2 (2013): 183–200.
- <sup>32</sup> Tim Cresswell, "Towards a Politics of Mobility," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 28, no. 1 (2010): 21, <https://doi.org/10.1068/d11407>.
- <sup>33</sup> Mimi Sheller, *Mobility Justice: The Politics of Movement in the Age of Extremes* (London, New York: Verso, 2018).
- <sup>34</sup> See Kerilyn Schewel. "Understanding Immobility: Moving Beyond the Mobility Bias in Migration Studies," *International Migration Review* 54, no. 2 (2019): 328–55; Caroline Zickgraf, "Keeping People in Place: Political Factors of (Im)mobility and Climate Change," *Social Sciences* 8, no. 8 (2019): 1–17.
- <sup>35</sup> See Cresswell, "Towards a Politics of Mobility"; and Tim Cresswell, *On the Move: Mobility in the Modern Western World* (New York, London: Routledge, 2006).
- <sup>36</sup> See Mimi Sheller, "Uneven Mobility Futures: A Foucauldian Approach," *Mobilities* 11, no. 1 (2016): 15–31, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17450101.2015.1097038>.
- <sup>37</sup> Peter Adey, "If Mobility Is Everything Then It Is Nothing: Towards a Relational Politics of (Im)mobilities," *Mobilities* 1, no. 1, (2006): 83, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17450100500489080>

- <sup>38</sup> See also Heike Paul, Alexandra Ganser, and Katharina Gerund, “Introduction,” in *Pirates, Drifters, Fugitives: Figures of Mobility in the US and Beyond* (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2012), 11–27.
- <sup>39</sup> Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands: The New Mestiza* (San Francisco: Aunt Lute, 1999).
- <sup>40</sup> See Sheller, *Mobility Justice*.
- <sup>41</sup> Rüdiger Kunow, “American Studies as Mobility Studies: Some Terms and Constellations,” in *Re-Framing the Transnational Turn in American Studies*, ed. Winfried Fluck, Donald E. Pease, and John Carlos Rowe (Hanover, NH: Dartmouth College Press, 2011), 245–64.
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- <sup>43</sup> Sheller and Urry, “New Mobilities Paradigm,” 209.
- <sup>44</sup> Mimi Sheller, *Island Futures: Caribbean Survival in the Anthropocene* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2020), 17.
- <sup>45</sup> Édouard Glissant, *Philosophie de la relation: Poésie en étendu* (Paris: Gallimard, 2009), 45, quoted in Michael Wiedorn, *Think Like an Archipelago: Paradox in the Work of Édouard Glissant* (New York: State University of New York, 2018), 113.
- <sup>46</sup> Roberts and Stephens, “Archipelagic American Studies and the Caribbean,” 4.
- <sup>47</sup> Vicente M. Diaz, “Voyaging for Anti-Colonial Recovery: Austronesian Seafaring, Archipelagic Rethinking, and the Re-mapping of Indigeneity,” *Pacific Asia Inquiry* 2, no. 1 (2011): 21–32.
- <sup>48</sup> In reference to Roland Barthes’ conception of myth as “frozen speech.” See Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1977), 235.
- <sup>49</sup> Obrist and Glissant, *Archipelago Conversations*, 25.
- <sup>50</sup> Obrist and Glissant, *Archipelago Conversations*, 69.
- <sup>51</sup> This conversation was held in July 2021 as part of the workshop that took place in person in Leipzig and also online.

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