Neimanis, Astrida. "Notes." *Bodies of Water: Posthuman Feminist Phenomenology*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016. 186–206. *Bloomsbury Collections*. Web. 26 Apr. 2023. <<http://dx.doi.org/10.5040/9781474275415.0004>>.

Downloaded from Bloomsbury Collections, www.bloomsburycollections.com, 26 April 2023, 05:44 UTC.

Copyright © Astrida Neimanis 2017. Released under a CC BY-NC-ND licence (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/>). You may share this work for non-commercial purposes only, provided you give attribution to the copyright holder and the publisher, and provide a link to the Creative Commons licence.

Notes

Introduction

- 1 Jackson (2013) provocatively wonders whether contemporary posthumanism might look very different, and open to different possibilities, if its genealogy were traced not through Foucault, but instead through postcolonial theorist Aime Cesaire, or even more radically, through black feminist writer and theorist Sylvia Wynter.
- 2 Many if not most of these debates are happening in conference rooms (and their corridors) and on blogs; it is difficult to therefore cite them using rigorous academic practice, but it does not make these debates less real. The key ways in which Object-Oriented Ontology departs from feminist new materialism is also convincingly argued in Rebekah Sheldon's (2015) chapter 'Form/Matter/Chora'.
- 3 Justifying study of the non-human as both proper to and important for gender and feminist studies has been taken up in Grosz (2012) and Colebrook (2012), among other places. (See also my argument in 'Natural Others?' (2014).) Rather than rehearsing those arguments at length, I hope this book as a whole will contribute to this debate and press the issue that Robyn Wiegman (2012: 39) tags as 'humanism's colonization of the province and practice of both politics and knowledge production within Women's and Gender Studies as we have known them'.
- 4 Having researched water primarily within feminist circles for over a decade, it is difficult to articulate this internal critique. It is often expressed in casual comments but far less often recorded and published. As I make clear, the value of feminist posthumanism versus some other nonfeminist versions is its explicit articulation of human and non-human oppressions, and their mutual conditioning of one another. This is probably the most valuable lesson of ecofeminism – which has also been heartily attacked within some corners of feminism. It is far easier to substantiate feminist critiques of ecofeminism than it is internal critiques of feminist posthumanism. While some of these critiques

(to my mind, helpfully) question a certain gender normativity and tricky essentialism that some very circumscribed ecofeminist arguments espouse, most ecofeminist work rejects this essentialism. It is therefore interesting to think about where critiques of ecofeminism are rooted. My suspicion is that it is at least in part connected to a profound dis-ease with a perforation of the species boundary, but also in part connected to our 'object desires'. As Wiegman (2012) unpacks, feminist scholarship has disidentified with 'woman' as its proper object, taking 'gender' as the replacement. But is 'gender' capacious enough to encompass the non-human? As Wiegman notes, the 'turn from *women* to *gender*' will have to keep turning, 'soon, no doubt, from *gender* to whatever will come to signify the ways in which it will have failed' (40). Will posthuman feminism have to engage this next disidentification, too, if it is to 'realize its full potential', as Wiegman suggests?

- 5 Importantly, the specific content of these claims has varied between feminisms. In the case of reproductive rights, black feminisms and indigenous feminisms have had very different stakes in fighting for bodily autonomy than have white, middle-class feminisms. The liberal language of autonomy has also been treated with suspicion among feminists of colour – which is also why these feminisms are a crucial part of the genealogy of posthuman feminism.
- 6 Jackson (2013: 672) points out that this does not mean that black or colonized subjects do, or must, remain humanists. Black critics such as Gordon did not seek uncritical admittance into the hallowed halls of humanism; they rather attempted to transform the category from within.
- 7 This is not to say that there aren't other historic and contemporary understandings of water that counter this hegemonic notion – the Syilx Okanagan indigenous cosmology poetically enacted by Jeanette Armstrong (2006), or the social natures of water described by Vandana Shiva in regards to Rajasthan's communal water tanks (2002), or the cultures around acequias in New Mexico and southern Colorado in the United States that enact as a form of irrigation facilitative of multispecies life (Garcia 2007) are just a few examples. But for certain, these do not represent dominant imaginaries of water in our contemporary world. The existence of such alternatives, however, is precisely what proves Linton's point, and shows up the *naturalization* of modern water as a social nature.
- 8 Recent examples include Fluid States-Fluid Sounds: http://www.soundstudieslab.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/FLUIDSTATES_FLUIDSOUNDS_call.pdf and Fluid Identities and Continuities: <http://catracrt.ca/2014/09/21/412/>

- 9 On multispecies ethnography, see Kirksey and Helmreich (2010). However, with its attention to animal species as the most salient earth others in these investigations, this method does not quite capture my focus on water.

Chapter 1

- 1 The phenomenological notion of the ‘natural attitude’ needs to be critically and cautiously approached by feminist and intersectional scholars, as it assumes a neutral ‘everyday’ or ‘ordinary’ way of being-in-the-world according to which these things appear as simple facts of existence, and that this appearance would be common to human experience. While this view may hold generally at the species level, it is too dismissive of how intersectionality and assemblages of power and belonging (Puar 2012) shape our experience of the material world. An uncritical natural attitude also belies the humanist error (with its attendant androcentricism, ablism, and racism) in accordance with which many phenomenological projects need to be critically scrutinized. At the same time, the bracketing of one’s habitual relations to things can nonetheless bring to light both how the natural attitude invisibilizes marginalized and queer orientations towards things-in-the-world (see Ahmed 2006) and how even these queer experiences can require further de-sedimentation of their own habitual assumptions. In other words, identifying dominant orientations to things in the world is a useful practice. Moreover, one’s own natural attitude need not be common to all knowing bodies.
- 2 I discuss the relationship between flat ethics and flat ontologies in ‘No Representation without Colonisation?’ (2015).
- 3 Both Florence Williams’s (2012) book on *Breasts: An Unnatural History* and Eva-Maria Simms’s article on toxic corporeality ‘Eating One’s Mother’ (2009) briefly describe the transit of toxins into Arctic waters and up the food chain to lactating Inuit mothers, but in ways that need to be questioned. The racism of Williams’s imperative ‘don’t picture Eskimo Man in sealskin on the top of the food chain. Picture his suckling baby’ (239) is troubling, to say the least. Her story focuses primarily on her own circumstances, and one of her key messages is her relief that regulations around certain toxins are better in the United States than elsewhere. While Simms expresses a more genuine concern for bodies beyond her own milieu, she also unwittingly juxtaposes activist-writers such as Sandra Steingraber who heroically seek out knowledge about their contaminated

bodily waters, with Inuit mothers who ‘go about the business of caring for their pregnant selves in the traditional ways, and do not know that they have been contaminated and invaded’ (273). The knowledge-crusader versus the naïf is a colonialist trope that ignores other research (Trainor et al. 2010) that underlines high levels of knowledge and concern within indigenous communities. Simms’s claim also suggests that if these mothers only knew more or better, they would act differently – but when the toxins permeate the air, water, and food around you, real choice is a false promise, and shifts the responsibility for toxic contamination away from its systemic sources.

- 4 There may be an additional objection: that the poisons travelling in breast milk are not *technically* part of our ‘bodies of water’ as most of these toxins (and others I discuss in this chapter) are lipophilic and contained in breast milk’s fatty content. My point, however, is that both our watery corporeal flows and planetary rivers and seas are nonetheless the vectors and highways for these pollutants.
- 5 As Merleau-Ponty (1962: vii) notes, phenomenology is at its most basic ‘the study of essence’. For Merleau-Ponty, however, this is not the biologically reductive or deterministic essentialism that feminism mostly abhors. Merleau-Ponty’s essences are not incompatible with bodies as changing, becoming: ‘It is true neither that my existence is in full possession of itself, nor that it is entirely estranged from itself, because it is an action or doing, and because action is, by definition, the violent transition from what I have to what I aim to have, from what I am to what I intend to be’; I ‘accomplish my own existence’ (382). Moreover, ‘it is impossible to superimpose on man a lower layer of behaviour which one chooses to call “natural”, followed by a manufactured or cultural or spiritual world. Everything is both manufactured and natural in man’ (189). See also Helen Fielding (2000) on Merleau-Ponty’s essences.
- 6 See also Eric Alliez (2004), in particular Chapter 3, and Brian Massumi (2002), in particular Chapter 8, both of whom agree that phenomenology cannot escape the paradigm of solipsistic subjective humanism. Graham Harman (2005: 52–53) has also lamented the fact that Merleau-Ponty ultimately ‘steps back’ from the innovative potential of his philosophy; the phenomenologist ‘artificially limits the scope of the cosmos to that of human awareness’ and in the end is no more than ‘a product of his age’. Deleuze (1994a: 51–52) moreover criticizes what he assesses as phenomenology’s inability to admit difference *as difference* into its philosophy. Despite his quarrels with certain aspects of phenomenology, Deleuze also acknowledges its potential in various ways. In his essay on Sartre entitled

- 'He Was My Teacher', Deleuze (2004: 77) notes that the work of Merleau-Ponty is 'brilliant and profound', even if (unfortunately, in Deleuze's estimation) 'tender and reserved'. Deleuze (1994a: 64–66) also acknowledges Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty's contributions to the development of an ontology of difference.
- 7 Other commentators who think the chasm between Deleuze and phenomenology need not be that wide include Leonard Lawlor (1998), Ted Toadvine (e.g. 2004), Henry Somers-Hall (2006), William Connolly (2011), and Renaud Barbaras (2004: xxii, 2001, and 2006). Feminist phenomenologist Gail Weiss (1999: see chapter 6 'Écart') is one of the few philosophers who emphasizes the debt that Deleuze owes to Merleau-Ponty in the context of rethinking difference through intercorporeality, although she does not pursue this connection in great depth. See also Tamsin Lorraine (2011: 4).
 - 8 Deleuze's theory on bodies has an acknowledged debt to Spinoza and the question Spinoza poses: What can a body do? (see Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 153; 253–265). For a deeper discussion on Deleuze's debt to Spinoza in terms of a theory of bodies, see Ian Buchanan (1997).
 - 9 'Is it not necessary', ask Deleuze and Guattari (1987: 270) 'to retain a minimum of strata, a minimum of forms and functions, a minimal subject from which to extract materials, affects and assemblages?'; after all, 'you have to keep small supplies of significance and subjectification, if only to turn them against their own systems when the circumstances demand it' (160).
 - 10 For deeper descriptions of the actual and virtual see 'The Actual and the Virtual' (Deleuze and Parnet 2002) and *Difference and Repetition* (1994: 208–214).
 - 11 See Samuel Mallin's (1979) work *Merleau-Ponty's Philosophy*.
 - 12 It is important to insist that this 'rightness' is always in the context of a body's specific capacities, and not in terms of an idealized body. All human bodies are differently abled; the loose unity of cohesion and 'rightness' will look different for different bodies. While it is possible to read a problematic ablism into Merleau-Ponty (particularly in his discussions of pathological embodiment), it is also possible to deploy his insights for understanding bodies in more inclusive terms. See also Note 1 above on the natural attitude.
 - 13 Vicki Kirby (2006: 132) argues that Merleau-Ponty's ontology of the flesh is a 'major assault on our most routine notions of subjectivity'.
 - 14 This understanding is already foreshadowed in *Phenomenology of Perception*, where Merleau-Ponty (1962: 250) discusses the body in space as a 'system of possible actions, a virtual body with its phenomenal "place" defined by its task and situation'; in other words, the body I live is only ever a 'provisional sketch'

- (1962: 198) of what it might be. Similarly, the world is for Merleau-Ponty (1962: 219) an 'open totality, the synthesis of which is exhaustible'; there is a 'depth' of objects 'that no progressive sensory deduction will ever exhaust' (216).
- 15 See Toadvine (2014) for a compelling discussion of how Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology also accommodates an 'asubjective time' – that is, the time of elementality, the time of worlds that precede and outlive us – at the heart of lived time. In this way, Toadvine convincingly defends Merleau-Ponty against charges of what Object-Oriented Ontologists call correlationism.
 - 16 My knowledge of Mallin's practice of body hermeneutics is primarily first hand, as a student of his from 2001 until around 2005. Mallin never published work on this methodology which he robustly worked up over decades of practice. The lineaments for it, however, can be traced in his reading of Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology (see Mallin 1979). My own understanding of phenomenology is immensely indebted to Mallin, even in our moments of disagreement.
 - 17 Felix Gonzalez Torres, *Untitled* (Water), 1997. Shown at the Koffler Gallery in Toronto, 2002.
 - 18 See Karen Barad (2007) on onto-epistemology.
 - 19 For example, a nineteenth-century understanding of embodiment in the West was 'ecological', as documented by environmental historian Linda Nash. This contrasts with the dominant twentieth-century experience of ourselves as discretely bounded individuals, which emerged in tandem with Western allopathic medicine that saw disease as intrinsic to an individual body and isolatable body parts (Alaimo 2010: 90). Rosi Braidotti (2011) invokes the concept of 'organs without bodies' to describe the liminal space of the late twentieth century where bodies stopped being more than the sum of their parts, and instead those parts (a womb, a kidney, a heart) were rendered increasingly detachable, fragmentable, and alienable through biotechnology.
 - 20 An alternative view is offered by Drew Leder (1990), who also points to biotechnological interventions such as sphygmomanometers that allow us to 'access' blood pressure, x-rays that allow us to see our lungs, or colonoscopy that makes the lumen visible. For Leder, however, 'the absences that haunt my bodily depths are not effaced by these reflective maneuvers' (44). In other words, Leder argues, while such apparatus give us data, we still do not experience our insides; the absences persist. Leder does suggest that other systems of knowledge, such as Taoism and Buddhism, may be better equipped at bringing the subtle (rather than completely absent) workings of our molecular selves into perception, and he hints that such Eastern knowledge would also be a matter of training. I take

this as in part a challenge to his own assertion of the ontological invisibility/inaccessibility of our recessive bodies. This also clears the way for my own wager, namely that we can hone or train our phenomenological attunement (paradoxically) by using the knowledge of the very systems that also obfuscate the appearance of visceral embodiment to us.

- 21 Donna Haraway (1988), 'Situated Knowledges'.
- 22 See Haraway (1988) 'Situated Knowledges' and Code (2012), 'Taking Subjectivity into Account'.
- 23 Deleuze also draws heavily on science to describe bodies. As John Protevi (2001: 2–3) writes, 'we are [...] confronted in Deleuze's works with a radically materialist philosophy that engages all the powers of contemporary physics and biology to analyze and intervene in those sectors of the contemporary global system which gleefully embrace difference and flow'. Deleuze not only tolerates a scientific perspective, but in fact demands that our philosophy of bodies include it – yet is careful not to slip into science as mere symbol or metaphor. Deleuze (quoted in Smith 1997: xxiv) suggests that 'perhaps these dangers are averted ... if we restrict ourselves to extracting from scientific operators a particular conceptualizable character which itself refers to non-scientific domains, and converges with science without applying it or making it a metaphor'.
- 24 As Protevi (2005: 195) has written in regards to Deleuze's position on the organizing tendency towards subjectification, 'this utility is primarily [...] a resting point for further experimentation'.

Chapter 2

- 1 The term 'sexuate' is a neologism used by English translations of Irigaray's work, as well as by Irigaray herself when communicating in English. As Rachel Jones (2011: 4) explains, "'sexuate' refers neither to a mode of being determined by biological sex nor to a cultural overlay of gendered meanings inscribed on a 'tabula rasa' of passively receptive matter. [...]. Rather it signals the way that sexual difference is articulated through our different modes of being and becoming, that is, in bodily, social, linguistic, aesthetic, erotic, and political forms'; sexuate difference, as understood by Jones is the 'irreducible difference which inflects every aspect of our being'. In Emily Parker's (2015: 91) helpful parsing, 'sexuate difference' is a term 'for the incalculable non-procreative alterity of bodies, without dimorphism'. In keeping with these interpretations, I use

the term 'sexuate difference' in this chapter if I am discussing it in ways that correspond to the above, but in context, the more general term 'sexual difference' is still sometimes called for.

- 2 This particular way of formulating this ethical demand was worked out by Mielle Chandler and me in our co-authored chapter 'Water and Gestationality: What Flows Beneath Ethics' (2013). My thinking in this chapter picks up on and extends this collaborative work.
- 3 To my knowledge, Irigaray does not use the precise term 'gestationality', although the concepts of the maternal, the placental, and the intrauterine are all prominent in her work. The appropriateness of this specific term, 'gestationality', was suggested to me by Mielle Chandler during her review of a very early draft of this project. Chandler expounds the notion of gestationality in reference to the work of Emmanuel Levinas (2008).
- 4 For good examples of this refutation that span decades of Irigarayan commentary, see Shildrick (1997), Braidotti (2003), and Jones (2011).
- 5 For example, Braidotti (2000, 2002, 2003, 2006), Grosz (2004, 2005), Lorraine (1999), and Olkowski (2000) all suggest an understanding of the feminine body in Irigaray's thought as at least in part 'virtual', enfolding both a history and an unknowability. The notion of 'becoming woman' as tied to a material metaphor of fluidity is also charted in Canters and Jantzen's *Forever Fluid* (2005).
- 6 Irigaray (1985b: 140–141) does not explicitly confront Deleuze by name in her writings, but she invokes his work in her expressed scepticism about 'multiplicities', 'desiring machines', and 'the body without organs' that, in her view, threaten effacement and appropriation of feminine pleasure and desire. Irigaray's criticisms of Deleuze are echoed by Jardine (1984) and Grosz (1994), although more recent work by Grosz (e.g. 2005) is more interested in the resonances between Irigaray and Deleuze. Indeed, a certain body of feminist scholarship has devoted itself to examining the relation between Irigaray and Deleuze. See Grosz (2004, 2005, 2011), Braidotti (2000, 2002, 2003, 2006b, *inter alia*), Lorraine (1999), Colebrook (2000), Olkowski (2000), Haynes (2012).
- 7 There is little indication in Irigaray's own texts that she would understand 'woman' as inclusive of trans-women or other non-binary genders. While this aspect of her work should rightfully be critiqued, I believe we can still find usefulness in her theory of elemental embodiment, and I argue it is possible to read Irigaray's understanding of sexuate bodies against some of her own statements. As Emily Parker (2015: 91) helpfully notes, by focusing on Irigaray's most recent claim that there are no 'neuter individuals', we could expand this to

- include alterities and differences beyond binarisms. My use of the term ‘woman’ does not indicate an endorsement of binary gender.
- 8 These commentaries not only point out the challenge that Irigaray presents to feminist theory (particularly when the stakes of biological essentialism are not only philosophical but also ethical and decidedly material) but also reveal some of the ways in which bodily and environmental matters have been a grappling ground for feminist theory for decades. As Elizabeth Stephens (2014: 191) helpfully remarks: ‘That debates about the status of the biological in Irigaray’s work were so central to its initial reception is thus important – not because they represent a misreading of her work, but because they are indicative of the complex and contentious role the biological has played within the history of feminist theory’.
 - 9 Such claims are difficult because ‘new materialism’ is not exactly new. See Ahmed (2008), Sullivan (2012), and van der Tuin and Dolphijn (2010). To suggest that Irigaray is an early (even anachronistic) feminist posthuman thinker or new materialist, as I do in this chapter, underlines that feminist new materialism is not amenable to linear narratives, but rather gathers possible pasts and potential futures in an ongoing unfolding.
 - 10 See van der Tuin and Dolphijn (2010) on transversal genealogies within new materialisms and also Clare Hemmings (2011). I provide a more detailed exploration of Irigaray’s relationship to feminist new materialisms in ‘Thinking with Matter, Rethinking Irigaray: A “Liquid Ground” for Planetary Feminism’ (2016).
 - 11 See Note 7 above regarding Irigaray and trans* embodiment.
 - 12 *Marine Lover* is her most watery text, although other essays also take up fluidity and waters. Breath is dealt with in many texts (Irigaray 1999, 2002a, 2002b), and is arguably the element on which she has most explicitly focused. Fire has not been extensively examined by Irigaray, although she notes that in an unpublished study she examines fire in relation to the work of Karl Marx (A. Martin 2000: 165 n34).
 - 13 While Irigaray would say ‘both sexes’ I would say ‘all sexes’.
 - 14 Kelly Oliver (1995) and Tasmin Lorraine (1999) provide helpful comments on Irigaray’s *Marine Lover*, both suggesting that Irigaray does not adequately consider how Nietzsche’s philosophy of the eternal return might also admit the return of difference. Both Oliver and Lorraine nonetheless find Irigaray’s critical attention to Nietzsche’s elision of the maternal and sexual difference compelling.

- 15 A similar association is made in Hélène Cixous's text 'Sorties: Out and Out: Attacks/Ways Out/Forays' (Cixous and Clément 1986), where she discusses the feminine body/of writing as diffuse, never fully knowable, fecund and overabundant, thus comparing it to a sea. In Cixous's text, like Irigaray's, the relation between the feminine, the maternal body, and the sea is invoked as ambiguous slippage and overlap, facilitated in part by the French language, where 'mer' and 'mère' (sea and mother) are homonyms. Cixous describes how men cannot separate themselves from 'seas and mothers' (88). She continues: 'But that's it – our seas are what we make them, fishy or not, impenetrable or muddled, red or black, high and rough or flat and smooth, narrow straits or shoreless, and we ourselves are sea, sands, corals, seaweeds, beaches, tides, swimmers, children, waves ... seas and mothers' (88–89).
In a move similar to Irigaray's, Cixous invokes a complex relationship between the feminine and the fluid that is hardly a direct, complete, or exclusive relation. In her descriptions, the relation of the feminine body to the sea is on some level metaphorical, but it is also materially constitutive and topographical, that is, the feminine is not only like water but also of water and in water in a variety of ways. A closer comparison of the relation between the feminine and the 'mer/mère' figurations in Cixous and Irigaray's work warrants further study.
- 16 It serves also to recall here that water, as a chemical entity, is not bound to a fluid form, and Irigaray certainly picks up and plays on these ambiguous actualizations in her work. However, when Irigaray refers to ice, vapour or other manifestations of water, they are referred to by those other names.
- 17 See Alphonso Lingis (1994), in particular Chapter 8 'Fluid Economy' and Chapter 11 'Elemental Bodies'.
- 18 Men are in fact usually even more watery than women, since women generally have a higher percentage of body fat than men.
- 19 Hence another connection is also introduced here – to our evolutionary watery beginnings – but this discussion will be explicitly taken up in Chapter 3.
- 20 See Irigaray's (1993a) essay on Merleau-Ponty, 'The Invisible of the Flesh', where she criticizes Merleau-Ponty for his failure to acknowledge the dispersed relation of tactility between mother and foetus in the intrauterine environment.
- 21 In posthuman feminist theorist Karen Barad's (2007) terms (see Chapter 1), such ontological cuts that separate out entangled phenomena are an enactment of 'agential separability' – that is, a mode of worlding and making knowable that belies the on-going intra-action of matters. These cuts are enacted by all kinds of apparatuses of knowledge.

- 22 See Shildrick's (1997: 25) critique of representations of women's bodies and reproduction that show 'the status of the foetus or embryo, even the pre-conceptus at times, [as] characterized as free-floating, independent, radically other than the mother herself'. Shildrick, like Irigaray, reminds us that the foetus has a necessary relationship to and a dependence on a specific gestational medium that, I am stressing, is also a body of water itself.
- 23 Irigaray bases this on her reading of Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1982), to which *Marine Lover* explicitly alludes. Irigaray finds Nietzsche's replication of the self-same in Zarathustra's penchant for heights, love of birds and disavowal of fish, and his crossing of bridges that keeps him from acknowledging the sea (see Nietzsche 1982, particularly Part One). Interestingly, however, Zarathustra also makes several references to his relation to the sea. For example, the Overman is referred to as a sea (125), and Zarathustra also talks of himself as a river in relation to the sea: 'I want to plunge my speech down into the valleys. Let the river of my love plunge where there is no way! How could a river fail to find its way to the sea? Indeed, a lake is within me, solitary and self-sufficient; but the river of my love carries it along, down to the sea' (198). Passages such as these, alongside Zarathustra's additional frequent comments on his need to 'go down' and 'go under' in fact suggest that Nietzsche indeed acknowledges his connection to and reliance on the fluvial feminine more than Irigaray would allow. I return to the evolutionary connections in Irigaray's love letter to Nietzsche in Chapter 3.
- 24 Note the significance of the term 'differentiation' (internal force of differing) alongside the more common English-language term 'differentiation' (differing from something external). Deleuze (1994a) makes extensive use of this conceptual slippage and deploys as well the concept of 'differenc/tiation' to underline the force of difference as simultaneously at work both internally and in relation. In this chapter, I mostly opt for the simpler 'differentiation', but hope that it will be read with this Deleuzian inflection.
- 25 Here again we see the inhospitability of Deleuze's philosophy to binary oppositional conceptual systems. Reading bodies of water through a Deleuzian framework that would understand this watery system as both open and closed also challenges Olkowski's (2000) reading of Irigaray and Deleuze, where she argues that Deleuze characterizes the world as an 'open whole' while Irigaray stops short of this, instead insisting on a 'totalizing framework' (Olkowski 2000: 103–104). Reading the work of Deleuze and Irigaray together, and particularly through our bodies of water, I suggest, shows that both would reject such binaristic options. (Olkowski does get at a key point here, however, when she

notes the burden put on fluidity in Irigaray's work: within a totalized framework the fluid must always 'be in excess with respect to form as well as permanently unstable by nature [104]'. Olkowski's observation here opens towards my own proposal, that is, that bodies of water are both finite *and* always still yet-to-come).

- 26 To insist on this specificity is certainly not to make any claims about 'motherhood' or to privilege breeding over other kinds of gestation and facilitation – a point to which I come back at the end of the chapter. It is possible to note the necessity of feminine waters for the proliferation of human life without tying it to an argument for the elevation of female reproductivity. At the same time, while the possibility of ectogenesis (out-of-body gestation) looms imminent on our horizon, we have not yet accomplished it. Shall science deliver to us this possibility in any viable or sustainable way, the very real elision of the maternal-gestational waters will no doubt bring with it questions and consequences we are only beginning to contemplate. See, for example, Olkowski (2006) on the intersubjective significance of the maternal-embryonic relation. On the feminist philosophical implications of ectogenesis see, for example, Gelfand, ed. (2006), Aristarkhova (2005), and Murphy (1989). Or, as Irigaray (2015: 103) herself writes:

The sexuation of the living is thus an essential key to an ecological ethics. It is also a crucial aspect of such an ethics, as it allows the species to survive through natural generation for which no fabrication can be substituted. Besides, whatever the technical mediations, the sex hormones must intervene to produce a new embryo. And it would be a pity if technical mediation would become substituted for an amorous union in the reproduction of living, as, alas!, it is already the case for a part of the animals.

- 27 Taking such claims at simplistic face value can be difficult, though, as Irigaray is simultaneously critiquing the phallogocentric symbolic economy in which woman, and sexual difference, as we currently know them, exist. In this same passage, she insists that the source of the ethical relation between two is cultivating the question 'who are you?' In leaving identity open, and by refusing the reduction of one to similarity or comparison with the other, Irigaray may give us room to radically renegotiate the identities of the bodies who hold this question between them.
- 28 For discussions, see Parker (2015), Jones (2011), Deutscher (2004), Stone (2003, 2006, 2015), and Braidotti (2002, 2003, 2006b).
- 29 Again: it is crucial that attention to the different social realities of the genders also consider how trans* bodies experience these violences, both materially and

- discursively. I attempt to pry open Irigaray's theory of sexual difference enough to admit a discussion of non-binary sexuate difference, but Irigaray herself offers little direct or explicit assistance in this endeavour.
- 30 This is in spite of overt pleas for reproductive futurisms and off-putting trends of 'yummy mummies' and the Hollywoodification of pregnancy. Of course, these trends cover over the racism, classism, and homophobia in which maternity is still mired, where only some pregnant bodies and mothers are valued. In short: while critiques of cultures of maternity and pregnancy are certainly necessary, these can't be at the expense of maternal labours *tout court*.
 - 31 While some readings focus on teasing out the nuanced differences between Deleuze and Irigaray (see Haynes 2012), I am more interested in how an amplification of their resonances can bring out certain tendencies and propositions in Irigaray's work that are otherwise washed away under the force of her dominant proclamations on sexuate difference.
 - 32 My argument for sexual difference itself as a force of differentiation, and as applicable beyond human bodies, has strong resonances with Rebecca Hill's (2015) argument for the same, where she draws on Elizabeth Grosz, Gilles Deleuze, Henri Bergson, and Jakob von Uexküll, although she arrives at this through a different pathway in Irigaray. My position here is also strongly resonant with Elizabeth Grosz's (2011) argument in *Becoming Undone*.
 - 33 As Lorraine (1999: 164) notes, 'it may be that Deleuze takes such mutual implication of lines of flight for granted'.
 - 34 Here, we could also add Maurice Merleau-Ponty's ontology of the flesh – discussed in Chapter 1 – as deepening the notion of gestationality even further. While Irigaray has indeed criticized Merleau-Ponty's notion of the flesh as presuming a symmetrical reversibility that would subsume the relation of two under the logic of the one, a careful reading of Merleau-Ponty shows that this is not the case. For Merleau-Ponty the 'flesh' is indeed a virtuality in the way we have just described above in relation to Deleuze's egg. See Vicki Kirby (2006) for a reading of Merleau-Ponty's ontology of the flesh (against Irigaray) as a fecund theory of gestationality.
 - 35 Similarly, Rachel Jones (2011: see chapters 6 and 7) finds that Irigaray's own statements that privilege the heterosexual couple are 'at odds' with the ways in which Irigaray herself describes sexuate difference more expansively.
 - 36 See also Penelope Deutscher's (2002) helpful reading of Irigaray's later work. As Deutscher claims, Irigaray's contributions to understanding sexual difference are best when she leaves the content of that term unspecified, as a pair of 'empty brackets' (2002: 49).

- 37 I am indebted to David Morris's (2007) accounts of the 'onto-logics' of faces and animals for my own suggestion that amniotics can be understood as an 'onto-logic'. From Morris, I have gleaned an understanding of how an onto-logic can be helpful for understanding human embodiment in terms of an underlying kinship that this embodiment shares with other expressions of being. In other words, this kinship reveals itself not in terms of *what* these bodies are, but rather in terms of *how* they are. Morris is keen to stress that 'logic' in this sense is not a formulaic theory used after the fact to explain something, but rather is more closely related to the Greek notion of 'logos' whereby logic is a being's inherent accounting for itself.
- 38 Importantly, 'we' do not make these cuts in the form of intentional decisions, although this can also be the case. In Barad's theory (2007) of agential separability, it is the ongoing intra-actions of matters of all kinds (things, ideas, words, apparatuses of knowledge, times, places, other phenomena) that 'world' these cuts; these cuts are the ways in which agency is an ongoing 'doing', rather than something we have or are given.
- 39 As Chandler and I (2013) argue: 'Within the binary logic of these frameworks, facilitation denotes "means" rather than "ends," passivity in contrast to activity; and it lacks the bounded self-determination essential for sovereignty. Water gives us material evidence of an alternative mode of being that seeks to problematize this hierarchical binary logic. We term this mode of being "gestationality"':
- 40 I've written about this elsewhere in 'Speculative Reproductions' (Neimanis 2014).
- 41 In Chapter 4, I discuss the commodification of the notion that 'water is life', particularly in terms of bottled water and charitable campaigning.

Chapter 3

- 1 'You have made your way from worm to man, and much in you is still worm. Once you were apes, and even now, too, man is more ape than any ape./ Whoever is the wisest among you is also a mere conflict between plant and ghost' (Nietzsche 1982: 124).
- 2 In *Je, Tu, Nous*, Irigaray (1993c: 37) criticizes a 'Darwinian model' of behaviour that she characterizes as life's struggle against both the external environment and other living beings. We should bear in mind that this common understanding of Darwinian thought as a 'survival of the fittest' also known as social Darwinism ignores the much more nuanced position of both Darwin and other evolutionary models, as I briefly explore below.

- 3 Most convincingly, Sheets-Johnstone (2007: 328) argues that both phenomenology and evolutionary science are grounded in descriptive foundations. She suggests that as a remedy to the former's ignorance of the latter, phenomenologists need to 'practice philosophy close-up' (334), which would mean 'consulting primary sources in invertebrate biology, ethology, and more, i.e. learning of animals in their natural habitats' (334). Yet, Sheets-Johnstone assumes too facilely that evolutionary biological research has produced a cohesive body of knowledge with no controversy or contradiction between reputable scholars. Sheets-Johnstone speaks of the biological literature as if it were a transparent map of the 'truth'. Such assumptions ignore evolutionary biology as a continuously evolving body of knowledge itself. Evolutionary theories need to rely heavily on speculation and conjecture, not least due to the fact that the fossil record has many important gaps and deficiencies. For example, not even seventy years ago the scientific consensus was that life on Earth began 600 million years ago. That figure has since been considerably revised to at least 3.9 billion years (Margulis 1982; Margulis and Sagan 1986). Sheets-Johnstone might exemplify what Elizabeth A. Wilson (2015; see Introduction and Chapter 1, in particular) describes as feminist engagements with science that aren't critical enough. Wilson calls for mutually interrogating dialogues that leave both 'sides' (feminist theory and biological sciences) transformed.
- 4 See *Creative Evolution* (2005), which seeks a philosophy that could accommodate both the continuity of all living beings and their differences implied by evolutionary change. Bergson suggests that the only way to do so would be to start from an examination of real life and the evolution of species.
- 5 Merleau-Ponty (2003) directly addresses Darwinian thought, as well as the interpretations of evolution that were being propagated at the time he was writing, in *Nature: Course Notes from the College de France*.
- 6 See both *A Thousand Plateaus* (Deleuze and Guattari 1987) and Deleuze's (1994) references to evolutionary thought and embryology in *Difference and Repetition*.
- 7 Elizabeth Grosz's (2004, 2005) work, to which I will return below, provides a strong argument for revisiting evolutionary theory and Darwinian thought specifically as a way to bridge the unproductive interdisciplinary divide between the life sciences and continental philosophy, as well as the persistent dichotomy of 'nature' and 'culture'. Grosz, similar to Sheets-Johnstone, muses about philosophy's amnesia regarding humanity's embodied evolutionary debts, but in the context of how it might enrich feminist and anti-oppression politics and theory. Braidotti (2002, 2006) more subtly folds an evolutionary perspective

- into her recent work, as she argues for the ways in which evolutionary theory (if cautiously used, in an embedded manner) can contribute to a revitalization of attention to *zoe* in philosophy. Donna Haraway makes an explicit case for attending to our evolutionary histories. Despite her novel rereading of our 'naturecultural' evolution stories, Haraway (2003: 15) nonetheless refers to herself as a 'dutiful daughter of Darwin.' For feminist critiques of the so-called 'facts' of evolution, see Fox Keller (1996), Gowaty, (1997, 2003), E. Lloyd (1996), Griet Vandermassen (2004), Emily Martin (1996), and Anne Fausto-Sterling (1997, 2003). Other significant continental philosophical treatments of evolution include the works of Keith Ansell Pearson (1997, 1999), Robert O'Toole (1997), and Manuel DeLanda (1997).
- 8 Drawing on Bergson, Ansell Pearson (1997: 183) notes that 'on a certain model one could legitimately claim that the "success" of a species is to be measured by the speed at which it evolves itself out of existence'. Hardly the 'fitness' that commonly comes to mind in contemporary sociobiological notions of evolution!
 - 9 Evolution is where 'a semiotic fragment rubs shoulders with a chemical interaction, an electron crashes into a language, a black hole captures a genetic message, a crystallization produces a passion, the wasp and the orchid cross a letter' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 69).
 - 10 Nor does Grosz specifically reference Irigaray or *Marine Lover* in this passage. Irigaray is elsewhere acknowledged in this text though, as one of Grosz's (2004: 13–4) '(ghostly) guides'.
 - 11 I am quite taken with the idea of evolutionary bodies citing one another as another kind of feminist politics of citation – in line with Gloria Wekker (2007) and Sara Ahmed's (2008) varying takes on these citational politics that keeps alive marginalized genealogies of ideas. Both are about acknowledging debts and cultivating connections. And if, as Vicki Kirby (2013) insists, there is no culture separate from nature, but only ever 'nature writing itself', over and over, then this overlap of bodily and textual citation is more than mere simile, or analogy.
 - 12 Deleuze repeats the example of a tortoise whose anterior member and neck can contort in ways that would kill us (Deleuze 1994a: 215; Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 47).
 - 13 Not all amphibians lay their eggs in water: some eggs are buried in the flesh of their mother's back, while some grow inside their father's throat, or cling to his thighs (Zimmer 1998: 108). But in all cases, the point is that these eggs require a watery environment to carry nourishment and allow waste to pass in and out of the egg throughout the gestational period.

- 14 The Hypersea theory complements microbiologist Lynn Margulis's theories of endosymbiosis, which argue that the driving force of evolution is in fact symbiotic relationships between organisms of often different phyla or kingdoms. See Margulis (1971) and Margulis and Sagan (1986); also Protevi (2007), Olkowski (2006). The Hypersea theory foregrounds the role and necessity of watery habitats and conduits in these symbiotic relations.
- 15 See also Michel Serres (2007) on parasites.
- 16 While Grosz (2004: 67) does indeed make references to sexual difference as incalculable, she also insists on sexual difference as 'two nonreducible forms ... which have their own interests, needs, organic body parts, and ways of negotiating the world through them.' This for Grosz is an 'irreducible binarism'. In the end, she claims that

The Darwinian model of sexual selection comes to a strange anticipation of the resonances of sexual difference in terms of contemporary feminist theory! It provides the outline of a nonessentialist understanding of the (historical) necessity of sexual dimorphism (67)

This quote exemplifies the trouble with Grosz's claims here; on the one hand, it insists on sexual difference as nonessentialist (virtual?), but on the other already invokes its actualized form in sexual dimorphism. Here, Grosz (and a reading of her work) encounters the same challenges as we find in Irigaray (particularly in its 'forgetting' of trans bodies). Grosz hints towards a mitigation of this point by suggesting that sexual dimorphism is a '(historical) necessity', and thus perhaps a feature of our own specific space-time. But she is not adequately clear on this. Even if we feel confident that sexual difference 'will not pass', can we make the same claims – as Grosz seems to – for masculine/feminine dimorphism?

- 17 Despite her focus on sexual dimorphism, Grosz (2004: 69) also acknowledges that this is not the only mechanism by which life proliferates; she notes that even self-fertilization of hermaphrodites usually involves 'a crossing interchange between two hermaphroditic individuals' – which suggests a reading of sexual difference closer to what I am suggesting, where the bodies of what is different and what gets crossed are not determined in advance.
- 18 At the same time, our human capacity to hold our breath below the surface for several minutes underlines vestigial traces of these possibilities swimming in our swampy flesh. The most accomplished 'free-divers' (divers who dive without the aid of breathing and pressure-regulating apparatuses) can hold their breath for almost three minutes while descending to depths of over 100 metres and then returning to the surface (Ferraras, 'The Deep Deep Blue'). The same could

- be said about the ability for infants to survive the first few moments of life in water without 'breath'. *Waterbirth International* explains this in terms of (a) the placental prostaglandin levels that inhibit a newborn's breathing reflex, (b) the fact that babies are born experiencing oxygen deprivation (apnea), which does not induce breathing or gasping, (c) the physiological barrier that prevents hypotonic water from mingling with the hypertonic lung fluids of the foetus, and (d) by the mammalian diving reflex that closes the glottis and ensures water would not be swallowed, or inhaled.
- 19 I cannot resist mention of Ferenczi's (2005: 57) most audacious observation: 'the peculiar fact that the genital secretion of the female among the higher mammals' which has an 'erotically stimulating effect' ... 'possesses a distinctly fishy odor (odor of herring brine)'.
 - 20 While Ferenczi's notes hold a heteronormative tone, it is not a stretch to imagine any number of sexual practices invoking a similar Thalassal imaginary and the yearning for an aqueous home.
 - 21 For a more extended discussion of our phylogenetic memories in relation to tears, see Gibbs and Hawke (2008) 'Sandor Ferenczi's Thalassal Trend'. See also Hawke, 'Evolutionary Water' (2011) for a discussion of Ferenczi, also in relation to Elaine Morgan's theory of the Aquatic Ape.
 - 22 An encephalization quotient (EQ) measures how big a mammal brain should be according to the weight of an average-brained mammal of a given weight and then factors in how far above or below this average a particular mammal's brain actually is (Zimmer 1998: 220). While *Homo Sapiens* have an EQ of about 7, various dolphins come in at the low to mid '4' range. A killer whale's EQ is 2.57, while the nearest primate's EQ is the chimpanzee's, at 2.34 (221).
 - 23 Morgan's theories are developed extensively in *The Descent of Woman* (1972) and *The Aquatic Ape* (1982). Support for her theories can be found in Verhaegen, Puech and Munro (2002) and other articles by Verhaegen. See also the collection of papers presented in 1999 at the 'Symposium on Water and Human Evolution.'
 - 24 Zimmer notes that dolphin sociality may be far more sophisticated than human intersubjectivity, but that we may not appreciate this because 'our anthropomorphism inevitably makes it hard to understand an intelligence other than our own' (131). As a result, we may use the criterion of 'self-awareness' as a mark of intelligence, without realizing that 'a choice between self-awareness and the lack of it may be one that dolphins don't have to make' (133). Dolphins have hierarchies and conflicts and may even be able to name each other, but dolphin 'society may nevertheless be one of an overlapping network of minds, wandering

linked through a transparent ocean'; 'If dolphins are in fact continually sharing and exchanging interior and exterior worlds with one another, our notion of self would be meaningless to them' (134).

- 25 These questions are equally important where knowledge – and knowledge of waters – is caught in a weir of late capitalism, where knowledge-making is funded by corporate interests. The general assumption prevails that knowledge is unquestionably a good thing. Where knowledge is commodified, where knowledge is seen as a means to an end (i.e. profit), and where *more* knowledge is actively promoted, we might choose to be more vigilant about the conditions and uses of knowledge production.

Chapter 4

- 1 *Kwe* is the Anishinaabemowin word for woman, or life-giver (Anishinaabe are a First Nation whose traditional territories are around the Great Lakes of Turtle Island, or Canada). *KWE* was also the title of a solo exhibition by Rebecca Belmore at the Justine Barnicke Gallery (Toronto) in 2014. Belmore has referred to herself as an Anishinaabe (*kwe*) artist. This word is not my language, but it offers a syntax I am trying to understand, with respect.
- 2 In Chapter 2, I explore Deleuze's concept of 'difference and repetition' in relation to the posthuman gestationality of water. I suggest that water is a powerful enactment of this Deleuzian idea: water is always 'the same', yet in its constant transformation as/in/through bodies across time and space, it reminds us that matter is always becoming different. The idea of posthuman gestationality allows us to think of water both as a commons and a facilitation of life-in-the-plural, and life becoming different. I return to the concept of difference and repetition below.
- 3 Irigaray's essay 'This Sex which is not one' argues for an understanding of the feminine as always plural and becoming. This idea is explored in relation to water in Chapter 2.
- 4 Since Head's paper, increasing numbers of theories have been forwarded to establish the Anthropocene era's 'golden spike'. While the Industrial Revolution may be the most common one, others include vague notions such as the beginnings of agriculture, or very precisely dated spikes such as the Trinity detonation of 1945. Lewis and Maslin (2015) provide a compelling review of the various proposals – concluding, interestingly, that the Industrial Revolution

- likely does not fulfil the criterion of providing 'a globally synchronous marker'. Lewis and Maslin also offer the colonization of the 'New World' as a serious proposition, which I return to below. Despite these interesting debates, however, my interest is not in precisely 'marking the Anthropocene', but in considering the work that the idea of the Anthropocene does more generally.
- 5 Haraway attributes this term to the participants of a conversation at Aarhus University in 2014. See Haraway (2015: 162 n 5).
 - 6 I suggest the designation 'Kwe' with some hopeful trepidation (or trepidatious hope). As noted above, Kwe is the Anishinaabemowin word for woman, or life-giver, and Belmore has referred to herself as an Anishinabe (kwe) artist. She has also suggested that she is 'native/woman/artist' but also 'woman/native/artist', but at the same time expresses frustration as an artist that 'people can't see beyond the "Indian-ness"' (Nanibush 2014: 216). By using 'Kwe' to name an orientation to the world that her work offers, I seek a word that captures all three of these things in their complex relation, while also trying to avoid a suggestion that Belmore's work is 'the' representation of Anishinabe cosmology, or that *she* is. At the same time, I also want to hold on to the alternative concepts that she offers as necessarily linked to Anishinabe philosophy and culture, and thus I turn to other Anishinabe scholars to help flesh out the ideas that circulate in her work. Beneath this all, I recognize that my use of this word 'Kwe' here is suspect. I nonetheless want to accept the consequences of taking this risk.
 - 7 Artworks are not the only way, of course. My own learning must come from various kinds of respectful listening to other words and activisms, too.
 - 8 It is a difficult task, as a white settler once in Canada, now in Australia, to invoke indigenous 'philosophies' or 'ways of life'. At the same time, I think working in the sweaty and impossible space of the cultural interface is necessary despite its inevitable failure. Here I call on important lessons taught to me by Dorothy Christian and Rita Wong in our collaborative endeavours in making *Thinking with Water* (eds. Chen, MacLeod, and Neimanis 2013). I am also inspired by the work (among many others) of Stephen Muecke (2004: 10), who writes, 'if I ask what distinguishes indigenous and non-indigenous orientations to the world, it is not to keep them apart, it is to ask what modes of relatedness between them are possible'. To transpose Muecke's careful modes and methods of scholarship into my own project, I look to Belmore's work not to assert that it is the same as my work on 'bodies of water', nor to suggest it is inalienably separate, but rather to think about the productive nature of their resonances.

- 9 In discussing human-water kinships in coastal Northern Territory of Australia, Elizabeth Povinelli (2015) makes clear that the indigenous worldviews of water here also include negotiations around green dollars, mining companies, and iPods. Human relationships with water are always determined within complex contexts – whether those humans are indigenous or aboriginal, or not.
- 10 Rebecca Belmore is not aligned with *Idle No More* in any ‘official’ capacity, but has expressed her support for its mission, noting in a response to an interview about politics: ‘I want more Idle No More’ (Nanibush 2014: 217).
- 11 See for example, Rajan (2012).
- 12 See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rPNAG8Q_0V4. Last accessed 10 February 2015.
- 13 Maracle in *Downstream* (2016).