

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This book emerged out of a number of conversations on elemental thinking across several events. Melody organized a two-panel stream on “Elemental Media” at the Society for Literature, Science, and the Arts in 2015, with panelists including Christopher Walker, Alenda Chang, Nicole Starosielski, Jamie Skye Bianco, Heather Davis, and Tom Idema. Inspired by John Durham Peters’s *The Marvelous Clouds* (2015), this panel explored how an elemental lens opens new kinds of critical engagements. Rather than representing the environment, panelists looked at how elements themselves—soils, heat, glaciers, water, atmosphere, plant life, petrochemicals—exhibit medial qualities. In 2016, Melody and Rafico co-organized a panel on “Hydrological Media” at the Society for Cinema and Media Studies, with participation from John Shiga and Chris Russill, examining how the varied materialities of water change the conditions of knowledge production about climate change. A month later, Melody participated in an “Elemental Media” conference at NYU organized by Nicole Starosielski (memorably the day after the 2016 election). At the same time, Nicole was launching a new book series for Duke University Press with Stacy Alaimo on “Elements,” which is now home to Melody’s first monograph *Wild Blue Media: Thinking through Seawater* (with Rafico’s debut monograph, *Slow Disturbance: Infrastructural Mediation on the Settler Colonial Resource Frontier*, in the SST series), as well as the book that you now hold in your hands.

However, it was our co-organized 2017 workshop on “Saturation” at UC Santa Barbara that really provided the opportunity for working out the theoretical possibilities of this concept. As fate would have it, the day of the conference—February 17—happened to be one of the rainiest days in Santa Barbara in recent memory, pouring a deluge of more than 5 inches over the course of the day. While this may not seem like much in other geographies, in the dry Mediterranean environment of Southern California, 5 inches of rain was enough to cause severe flood-

ing and knock down trees. As the group discussed possible valences of saturation—literal, figurative, cognitive, watery, sonic, and more—workshop attendees would get the occasional “ping” of an emergency alert on their phones, advising of road closures and flooding conditions. We would like to thank Jeremy Douglass, Lisa Han, Mél Hogan, Paulina Mickiewicz, Rahul Mukerjee, Max Ritts, Chris Russill, Bhaskar Sarkar, and John Shiga for braving the elements and giving papers that shaped the conversation around “Saturation.” The workshop also benefited from the engaged participation of our audience members, including Constance Penley, Janet Walker, Bishnupriya Ghosh, Sage Gerson, Tyler Morgenstern, and Daniel Martini Tybjerg. The “Saturation” workshop was generously supported by the UC Santa Barbara Academic Senate, the Interdisciplinary Humanities Center, Literature & Environment Center (English Department), Transcriptions Center (English Department), Film & Media Studies, and Comparative Literature.

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