



Interdisciplinary Research Project “Non-Anthropocentric Cultural Subjectivity”
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TRANSPPOSITIONES

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Call for Papers

Thematic focus of the issue:

**Fluid Landscapes: The Multifaceted Representations of Water
in Literature and Art**

Accounts of water in art and literature date back to the oldest narratives and cultural practices. In many creation stories, water plays a foundational role as a primordial element. For example, in ancient Mesopotamian mythology, the Enuma Elish describes the mingling of the freshwater god Apsu and the saltwater goddess Tiamat as the origins of creation. Similarly, in Hindu cosmology, water is revered as a life-sustaining force, with the cosmic ocean (Samudra) forming the backdrop for significant mythological narratives. Also, in the Old Testament, water appears as one of the first elements of creation (Gen 1:2); it also becomes an instrument of purification from sin through the flood (Gen 6–9) or a blessing in the form of rain (Deut 11:10–12). The concept of purification through water is deeply rooted in rituals like ablutions in Judaism or Islam, Christian baptism ceremonies, and immersions in the cleansing waters of the Ganges in Hinduism. Rain and its absence are also central to Indigenous oral traditions, such as the rainmaking ceremonies of Native Americans.

In the tradition of European modernity, water also emerges as a significant point of reference. Leonardo da Vinci was once famously named a “Master of Water” in the records of the Florentine government. He explored diverting the river Arno away from Pisa, then Florence’s enemy, thereby cutting its access to the sea. For Leonardo, water could be exquisitely beautiful in its flows, eddies, and swirls. His illustrations of moving water were not only observations of a single moment in time but also visualizations of his thought process. Leonardo’s depictions reflected the three-dimensional nature of flowing water, showing the idea that turbulent flows consist of a range of co-existing eddies, varying in scale from large to small. This concept, known as the “cascade model of turbulence,” was mathematically formalized in 1941 by A.N. Kolmogorov and even today remains an essential tool for visualizing flowing water.¹

The example of Leonardo is particularly significant as it illustrates the duality of modernity’s approach to water, or more broadly, to the more-than-human world as a whole. On the one hand, it reveals a remarkable ability to observe, describe, and understand natural phenomena; on the other, it exposes a tendency toward instrumentalization and the subjugation of the elements to human logic driven by particularistic benefit. This dualism calls for deconstruction, especially in the context of extreme ecological threats, such as floods and droughts we are witnessing in times of the global climate crisis.

Literary texts and paintings depicting landscapes of water explore its multifaceted meanings: as a place separating the known from the unknown, a space of adventure and the development of one’s personality, a space inhabited by various unusual creatures (including imaginative creations), and as a space in need of protection, home to endangered species.

The aim of the issue is to explore the relationship between waterscapes and literary narratives and works of art, including the complex relationship between poetic representations of waterscapes and ecological thought from an interdisciplinary perspective. By examining literary and visual works that engage

¹ Susan Broomhall, Greg Ivey and Nicole L. Jones: How Leonardo da Vinci, ‘Master of Water’, explored the power and beauty of its flow, *The Conversation*, 04.04.2019, <https://theconversation.com/how-leonardo-da-vinci-master-of-water-explored-the-power-and-beauty-of-its-flow-112401>.

with aquatic ecosystems and the materiality of water, the issue seeks to discover how poetic and artistic expression mediates our understanding of environmental crises and the relationship of the human to the more-than-human in the aquatic environment. The issue aims to highlight, on the one hand, the complex relationship to water bodies depicted in literature and art throughout history, and on the other hand, to delve into how water signifies, shapes, and intersects with ecological discourse.

When planning this thematic issue of our journal, we invite potential contributors to submit abstracts exploring the image of water and its symbolism, creatively engaging the wide-ranging connections between literature and art, theology and spirituality over the centuries, also taking into account perspectives that reflect more-than-human subjectivity.

Proposals comprising a 250-word abstract in English or German and a brief biographical note should be sent to: transpositiones@uw.edu.pl by **February 10, 2025**.

A decision will be made regarding the final selection by **February 15**.

Deadline for submitting completed manuscripts: **April 30, 2025**.

The issue is expected to be published in autumn 2025.

Publication language: English and German.

TRANSPOSITIONES is an interdisciplinary biannual peer-reviewed journal correlated with the topics of the project “Non-Anthropocentric Cultural Subjectivity” realized as part of the Research Excellence Initiative at the University of Warsaw primarily oriented towards interdisciplinary publications addressing issues of posthumanist theories of the late anthropocene. It is published by the German publishing house Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht (imprint of BRILL Deutschland GmbH).

More information: <https://transpositiones.uw.edu.pl/en>