An aerial photograph of a person swimming in the ocean. The water is a deep, dark teal color, and there is a large, intricate pattern of white foam from waves on the right side. The person is a small figure in the lower right quadrant, wearing a dark swimsuit and a white cap.

# THE OCEAN READER

HISTORY, CULTURE, POLITICS

*Eric Paul Roorda, editor*

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HISTORY, CULTURE, POLITICS

*Eric Paul Roorda, editor*

DUKE UNIVERSITY PRESS *Durham and London* 2020

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Printed in the United States of America on acid-free paper ∞

Typeset in Monotype Dante by BW&A Books, Inc.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Roorda, Eric, editor.

Title: The ocean reader : history, culture, politics /

Eric Paul Roorda, editor.

Other titles: World readers.

Description: Durham : Duke University Press, 2020. |

Series: The world readers | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2019013468 (print)

LCCN 2019980730 (ebook)

ISBN 9781478006961 (paperback)

ISBN 9781478006008 (hardcover)

ISBN 9781478007456 (ebook)

Subjects: LCSH: Ocean. | Oceanography.

Classification: LCC GC21 .O266 2020 (print) | LCC GC21 (ebook) |

DDC 551.46—dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2019013468>

LC ebook record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2019980730>

Cover art: Surfing waves. © Michael Duva/The Image Bank.

Courtesy of the artist and Getty Images.

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produced with a grant from  
Hartford Foundation for Public Giving  
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To my brave companions of the Sea and of life:

My father, William Simon Roorda

My spouse, A. E. Dee Doyle

Our daughters, Alida Anna and Frances Elizabeth

My sister, Alida Kay “Leedee” Roorda Berryman

My brothers, Randall and Terence

And most of all, our beloved family matriarch,

Pearl Elaine Carpenter Roorda (1929–2005)

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## A Note on *The Ocean Reader*

Most of the images in *The Ocean Reader* may be found in the Roorda/Doyle Collection. The collection gathers, preserves, and makes available online to the public images and other texts, mainly related to the Ocean and ships, the Dominican Republic, Cuba, and bananas, especially anything having to do with the United Fruit Company (UFCO).

A. E. Dee Doyle began the collection in 2005, while doing research on UFCO at the Munson Institute, when she began to collect ephemera related to the company's operations, beginning with a postcard of a "Great White Fleet" steamship. Doyle's subsequent UFCO acquisitions formed the foundation of the collection.

I also acquired items while pursuing my own research on the Dominican Republic and Cuba. Combining these with Dee's UFCO trove, the aggregate resembled a small archive. So we gave it a name and kept adding to it as we continued to work on our interrelated projects. Years later, the Roorda/Doyle Collection now contains thousands of items, the vast majority being images, including most of the illustrations from my previously published books: *The Dictator Next Door* (Duke University Press, 1998), *Cuba, America, and the Sea* (Mystic Seaport Press, 2005), *The Dominican Republic Reader* (Duke University Press, 2014), and *Twain at Sea: The Maritime Writings of Samuel Langhorne Clemens* (University Press of New England/University of Massachusetts Press, 2018).

The Roorda/Doyle Collection may be accessed at <https://www.roorda-doyle.com>.

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# Acknowledgments

*The Ocean Reader* originated with a graduate program called the Frank C. Munson Institute of American Maritime Studies, founded in 1955 at Mystic Seaport Museum. The anthology represents many aspects of the Munson Institute curriculum, which its faculty has shaped. The work of these scholars made this collection possible. Therefore, I am primarily grateful to the collective Munson Institute faculty, especially the codirector of the program, Glenn S. Gordinier.

I thank James T. Carlton, longtime director of the Williams College–Mystic Seaport Program, for my three great years as its postdoctoral fellow, and for his contributions to this anthology.

I am indebted to John B. Hattendorf, Ernest J. King Professor Emeritus at the U.S. Naval War College and former director of the Munson Institute. Thanks to the Munson Institute's other past faculty for building its strong foundation: former director Ben Labaree, William M. Fowler Jr., Jeffrey J. Safford, and the late Edward W. Sloan.

Among my Munson colleagues, I owe professional gratitude to W. Jeffrey Bolster for giving his time to the institute for a decade, and personal thanks for advising me in 1987 to apply to Long Island University's SEAmester program. Another Munson professor who merits my special thanks is Helen Rozwadowski, an energetic contributor to the Munson program, whose work on the Ocean's third dimension influenced this volume's contents, and whose erudition on the literature of the Ocean was key to assembling the "Suggestions for Further Reading."

Special thanks also to Marcus Rediker for giving his time to the Munson Institute and inspiring its participating scholars; for his many important books, which shaped this anthology's sections on piracy and the slave trade; and for providing the painting by Haitian master Frantz Zéphirin in the color plates.

The National Endowment for the Humanities generously funded Summer Institutes for college educators through the Munson Institute in 1996, 2006, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016, and 2018, earning our lasting gratitude.

Mystic Seaport Museum graciously hosts the Munson Institute. Thanks to its helpful staff, especially President Steve White, Executive Vice President Susan Funk, Vice President of Collections Paul O'Pecko, Collections Access

Manager Maribeth Bielinski, Carol Mowrey, who also works in Collections Access and administers the Munson Institute's NEH Summer Institutes, and Associate Director of Institutional Advancement Claire Calabretta.

I am thankful for Bellarmine University in Louisville, Kentucky, which has been my academic home since 1996. The late Dr. Margaret H. Mahoney has my fond and undying respect and admiration. She was my loyal mentor until she retired in 2014, after fifty-five years of service at Bellarmine. Thanks to my congenial coworkers in the Department of History: Fedja Buric, Robert Pfaadt, and Timothy K. Welliver. I immensely appreciate the help of our administrative coordinator, Lora Roberts, and her student assistants, who were instrumental in preparing this manuscript.

*The Ocean Reader* reflects my time at sea, starting with SEAmester, led by C. Douglas Hardy, whom I thank for the experience of eighteen weeks on the Ocean, with its joys and terrors. For living to tell the tale, I thank Captain Bert Rogers of the *Spirit of Massachusetts*, now executive director of the American Sail Training Association. I've made forty voyages since then, totaling more than a year at sea, as a lecturer on cruise ships. Thank you Crystal, Cunard, Holland America, Princess, Regent Seven Seas, Royal Olympia, Seabourn, Silversea, and Viking.

Thank you to everyone who generously helped with permissions for the Reader's contents.

Thanks to Erin Grieb for the map.

Katrina Bercaw has my fond gratitude for kindly contributing photographs and excerpts from her journal of sailing around the world.

Friendly and generous help and encouragement from Deborah Byrd of EarthSky gave me a boost early in this effort—thanks, Deborah!

I thank the anonymous reviewers for offering useful advice and kind words.

Thanks to my advisors at Johns Hopkins, Louis Galambos and Franklin W. Knight Jr., and my mentor at William and Mary, Edward P. Crapol, for always supporting me.

Warm fuzzies to our friend and astrologist Julianne Johnson, a long-distance Ocean sailor, who is a magical touchstone for my family. (Pats for Pip!)

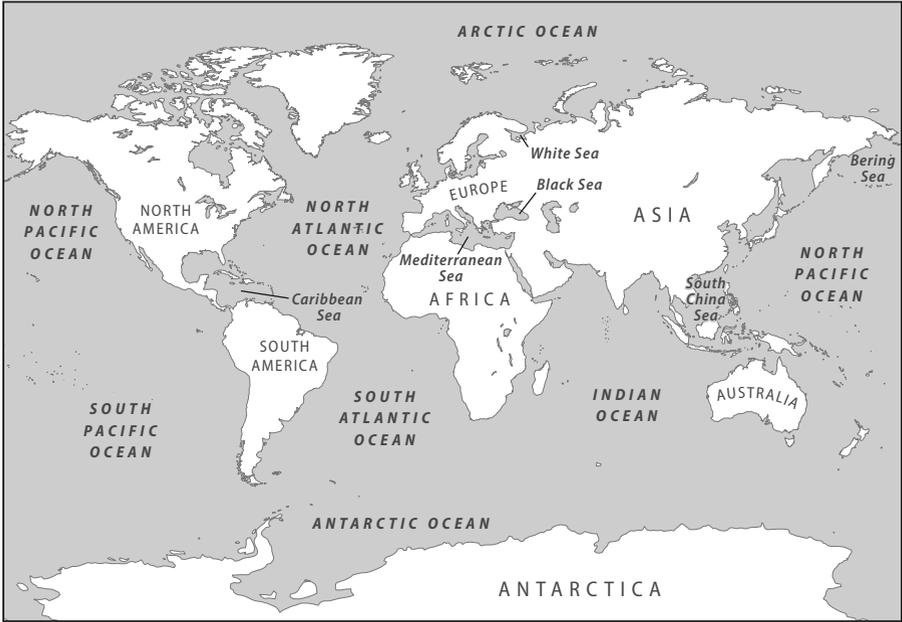
I am very proud of, and thankful for, my association with Duke University Press for more than two decades. I remember with gratitude and admiration the late Valerie Millholland. My editor, Miriam Angress, deserves sainthood for her patience and forbearance. I appreciate the editorial board's decision to publish this volume in the World Readers series. Duke provided the services of a legion of astute and energetic (and patient and forbearing) interns, who put in untold hours preparing this volume for publication. I thank each of them: Martin Caver, Peter Delgobbo, Natasha Derezinski-Choo, Manda Hufstedler, Camila Moreiras, Renee Michelle Regin, Colleen Sharp, Tamar Malloy, and Whitney Wingate.

My survival depends on A. E. Dee Doyle, my life partner, editor, publicist, webmaster, computer consultant, and curator of our archive, the Roorda/Doyle Collection, source of most of this book's images. Dee's research on the United Fruit Company informed this book's treatment of the cruise industry. Moreover, she is the mother of our daughters, Alida and Frances, who are perfect in every way.

To end at the beginning, I owe an Ocean of gratitude to my parents, the late Pearl Elaine Carpenter Roorda (1929–2005) and the vigorous William Simon Roorda (born in 1923, the son and grandson of sailors). They inspired me to love Big Water, by providing my idyllic childhood summers on the shores of that inland sea Lake Huron.

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Five Oceans map.

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# Introduction

This volume of the World Readers series is devoted to the Ocean, which currently covers 71 percent of the world, a figure that is certain to rise along with sea level. The aqueous regions of the earth have been important throughout human history, politics, and culture, but never more so than now.

It has always been difficult for humans to think of the Ocean as a place. Those who have considered the watery majority of the planet on its own terms have often seen it as a changeless space, one without a history. Because the Ocean can't be plowed, paved, or shaped in ways the eye is able to discern, it has seemed to be a constant, while the land has changed drastically over the centuries. The fish and marine mammal populations of the Ocean have also seemed unchangeable, inexhaustible, and impervious to the onslaught of the harvesters. But such is not the case. As this collection emphasizes, the Ocean is changeable, and it has a history.

Terracentrism, a term that is rapidly gaining currency, refers to people's tendency to consider the world and human activity mainly in the context of the land and events that take place on land. This book aims to avoid that natural bias predominating among our terrestrial species and replace it with a steady focus on the Ocean and on events that take place offshore. Such an aquacentric perspective can be found in an increasing number of scholarly works, as the overarching importance of the watery parts of the world gains wider recognition. This awareness in turn contributes to a growing consensus that we need to take concerted action to avoid the devastating consequences of having ignored the Ocean for too long.

The Seven Seas is a mutable concept. In antiquity, the seven bodies of water in question were all really just embayments of the Mediterranean Sea, which itself is merely an embayment of the Atlantic Ocean. The Atlantic Ocean and the other bodies of water now designated as oceans on maps of the world constitute a relatively recent variation of the Seven Seas. In reality, there is only one interconnected global Ocean, with currents that exchange water widely among its different regions, with the same molecules of H<sub>2</sub>O moving from one of today's seven Oceans to another, and then another, over the course of ageless and endless cycles of circulation.

There is one big Ocean, and while its regions have been conceptualized

as separate bodies of water and named as different Oceans, the fact is, they are all connected, and seawater travels widely and endlessly across these artificial geographic markers. The largest of the regions is the Pacific Ocean, which is an expanse of 64 million square miles (about 165 million square kilometers [km]). It is difficult to grasp such enormous dimensions. By contrast, the landmass of Asia, the largest continent, is only about 17 million square miles (44 million square km), while North America covers just 9.5 million (24.6 million square km), of which the United States represents less than half, with 3.8 million square miles (9.8 million square km). The Atlantic Ocean is half the size of the Pacific, which is nearly ten times the size of the United States, at 32 million square miles (almost 83 million square km), while the Indian Ocean covers 28 million square miles (72.5 square km). The area of the Antarctic, or Southern, Ocean is less than 8 million square miles (20.7 million square km), and the smallest is the Arctic Ocean, with about 5.4 million (14 million square km).

The deepest place in the Ocean is in the Pacific, at the bottom of the Mariana Trench, a fissure in the seafloor some 1,580 miles (2,550 km) long and 43 miles (69 km) wide, which reaches more than 36,000 feet (nearly 11,000 meters [m]), more than 6.8 miles (about 11 km). The deepest Ocean generally is the Antarctic, which ranges from 13,100 to 16,400 feet (4,000–5,000 m) deep, while the average depth of the Indian Ocean is 12,762 feet (3,890 m). The Pacific Ocean averages more than 12,000 feet (3,600 m) deep, and the Atlantic, which reaches a depth of five miles (8 km) in the Puerto Rico Trench, averages nearly 11,000 feet (3,400 m). The shallowest is the Arctic Ocean, with an average depth of less than 3,500 feet (1,050 m), which allows the upwelling of nutrients from the seabed to take place, attracting whales and other sea animals to the northern latitudes.

The tectonic plates that make up the crust of the planet are most active around the Pacific Ocean, which is rimmed by subduction zones known as the Ring of Fire, a chain of submarine volcanoes and fault lines that make the Pacific the most volatile of the seas. Islands form and expand, as Hawai'i continues to do, with the most active volcano in the world pouring molten rock into the sea regularly, and they suddenly disintegrate, as Krakatoa did in 1883, when the largest explosion that has occurred in human history erased most of the island. Undersea earthquakes churn up epochal tsunamis around the Pacific basin, with the Japanese disaster of 2011 being both the most recent and the worst ever recorded.

The winds and waves that sweep over the Ocean are subject to circular patterns collectively known as the Coriolis effect, named for the French physicist Gaspard-Gustave de Coriolis (1792–1843), who first described the phenomenon in 1835. As a result of the earth's rotation, the air and water alike move in gyres, in both hemispheres, with the motion trending clockwise in the north and counterclockwise in the south. These predictable movements

in the atmosphere go by names that have gained romantic connotations, such as the southeast and northeast trade winds, and the westerlies. Likewise, the enduring patterns that seawater follows in tandem with the winds have become fluid geographic references. The North and South Equatorial Currents, in both the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, follow the storied line in opposite directions. The Canary Current brings cold water from the northern Atlantic to the latitude of its namesake islands, then feeds the North Equatorial Current, much like the California Current does in the Pacific Ocean. The chilly Peru Current, 100 miles wide, flows north in the Pacific Ocean, offering a highway for migrating sea life. Perhaps the most famous was the first to be identified, the Gulf Stream, which is equivalent to a thousand Mississippi Rivers gushing forth from the warm Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean Sea, skirting North America, making Bermuda balmy year-round, even when the coast of the Carolinas, 500 miles to the west, is frigid. The largest of them all is the Antarctic Circumpolar Current, or West Wind Drift, which flows clockwise around the frozen continent, a band of constantly moving seawater 13,000 miles (21,000 km) in circumference, with a volume equal to 100 times the combined capacity of all the rivers on the planet!

*The Ocean Reader* combines a present-day perspective with a broad approach and consciousness of future implications. It serves as an introduction to the multifaceted Ocean, which is an enormous and very complicated system. Humans interact with that system in many ways. They relentlessly hunt sea creatures, taking 90 million tons of fish from it annually. They use it as a highway, with 100,000 ships at sea right now. They study it, find inspiration in it, play on it, and fight over it.

This anthology samples a variety of approaches to understanding the sea, reflecting what might be called the new Ocean history. Kären Wigen introduced this reinvigorated field to the readers of the *American Historical Review* in a special issue called “Oceans of History” in June 2006. She said, “Maritime scholarship seems to have burst its bounds; across disciplines, the sea is swinging into view.” Environmental science, social history, marine ecology, and other approaches have combined to transform the field of maritime studies.

*The Ocean Reader* includes many forgotten or overlooked gems of maritime writing, as well as previously unpublished selections from manuscript sources, from around the world. While the majority of the selections come from sources in English, and many have to do with topics touching on the United States, the balance of the entries come from non-English sources and have to do with other cultures and countries.

Ocean is capitalized in this book. This deviation from conventional style is intended to claim a formal name for that vast place within the realm of World History, as if it were a country or a continent. The stylebook spelling of “ocean” diminishes it as a geographic reference. To capitalize Ocean is to

challenge the conventional wisdom that the seas can be taken for granted. They cannot.

*The Ocean Reader* is organized thematically into twelve parts. Each part consists of selections that range chronologically from the earliest applicable period to the most contemporary. The themes are, basically, as follows: tales of the Ocean's origin, ancient seafaring, exploration, fishing and whaling, warfare, piracy, transportation, survival, religious and artistic inspiration, recreation, marine science, and the dire present and future plight of the Ocean. These categories overlap and intertwine along manifold lines, to the extent that a large proportion of the entries could easily fit into more than one part. Each of the parts could stand alone as a book of its own, a thick volume, even a trilogy, or a series of books, for that matter, because the literature concerning each topic is so vast and rich. It has been an impossible task to choose the perfectly representative sample, one that could be printed as a manageable volume, from this Ocean of words.

However incomplete this Reader must be for that reason, the most important part is the last. It concerns the compounding environmental disasters taking place in the Ocean right now, which are mainly being ignored. Everyone should be aware of this information, because we all depend on the Ocean, which is in trouble.

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