

CURRENT ISSUES
IN NORTH AMERICAN STUDIES AND CULTURAL STUDIES

Oceanic Intimacies

Whaling Wives, Life Writing, and Colonial Ecologies in the Pacific, 1845-51

Dr. Katharina Fackler
North American Studies Program



Thomas R. Bloomfield, from the logbook of the "Indian Chief" (1842-44)

In the mid-nineteenth century, an increasing number of New England women joined their captain husbands on often years-long whaling voyages across the world's oceans. These women took up a highly ambiguous role in a global extractive industry shaped by US imperial ambitions. Under the strictly gendered regime of maritime labor, they were tasked with making the ship a home – an endeavor that stands in a striking tension with the intense violence that the whaling business spelled for humans, animals, and entire ecosystems. In her lecture, Dr. Fackler will explore how the journals kept by whaling wives articulate a variant of what Amy Kaplan has called "manifest domesticity," suggesting that the imbrication of white middle-class domesticity with imperial projects has distinct ecological implications.

Tuesday
February 2, 2021
6:00-7:30 pm

PLEASE NOTE
Online event, to be
streamed via Zoom.
Please register via
lecturesbonn@gmail.com.

Katharina Fackler is a lecturer in North American Studies at the University of Bonn. She has held research and teaching positions at the universities of Regensburg and Graz and has been a visiting scholar at Emory University, the Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library, and the Library of Congress, among others. She is the author of *Picturing the Poor: Photography and the Politics of Poverty in the 1960s* (Penn State University Press, forthcoming) and currently working on a research project entitled "Entangled Mobilities: Early American Sea Writing and (De-)Colonial Ecologies."

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