

EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION

The Editors of the *Journal of Indian Ocean World Studies (JIOWS)* are proud to present a special issue of our journal, organized and co-edited by Martin Slama and Iain Walker. This issue represents the co-editors' second special issue of the *JIOWS* focused on the themes of diaspora and transnationalism in the Indian Ocean World (IOW), the first being Vol. 4, Iss. 2 (2021). This special issue contains four original articles, written by Franziska Fay, Akbar Keshodkar, Wilson Chacko Jacob, and Meera Venkatachalam. Slama and Walker introduce these articles in full in their editorial introduction (pp. 3-9).

As with the first special issue, the co-editors challenge and refine our understanding of diaspora in Indian Ocean World Studies. In this instance, they do so with a reflection on 'plurilocality.' In their terms, plurilocal societies are those that are spatially dispersed (over two or more locales), but which maintain a social cohesion in spite of distance. This distinguishes them from 'multi-sited' communities, which do not necessarily maintain connections between sites. It also moves understandings of the spatial components of the IOW away from just the national and statal, towards the idea of much more fluid and overlapping social, cultural, and communal milieus.

The co-editors' conceptualisation of plurolocalism in IOW Studies builds on the idea of the 'diaspora for others,' developed and expanded on in the co-editors' first *JIOWS* special issue. In that issue, they defined the 'diaspora for others' as 'a group of people who maintain a sense of cohesion and of collective identity that is of both *symbolic and practical significance*, across time and space.'¹ Meanwhile in this issue, building on the works of scholars such as Roger Rouse and Ludger Pries, their (and their contributors') 'exploration of a variety of types of plurilocal societies exposes the fluidity of spatially dispersed social groups and the different modalities of how diasporas are constituted,' including across time (p. 5). The editors of the *JIOWS* urge readers to read both special issues collectively to refine our understandings of diaspora, space, and social connectivity in Indian Ocean World Studies and beyond.

This special issue also features the return of the *JIOWS*' Book Reviews section. In this issue, three books are reviewed: Burhard Schnepel and Julia Verne's edited volume, *Cargoes in Motion* (2022); Smriti Srinavas, Bettina Ng'weno, and Neelima Jeychandran's edited volume, *Reimagining Indian Ocean Worlds* (2020), and Faisal H. Husain's

¹ Iain Walker and Martin Slama, "The Indian Ocean and a diasporic space: A conceptual introduction," *Journal of Indian Ocean World Studies*, 4, 2 (2021), 80. Emphasis in the original.

monograph, *Rivers of the Sultan* (2021). According to the reviewers, each represents a major contribution to IOW Studies, such as in terms of connectivity, travel, and migration (Schnepel and Verne), fundamental conceptualisation of the field (Srinavas, Ng'weno, and Jeychandran), and global environmental history (Husain). The editors of the *JIOS* are proud to highlight this scholarship to our readership.

The *JIOS* Editorial Team