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# Oceanic Archives, Indigenous Epistemologies, and Transpacific American Studies

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## Oceania as Peril and Promise

### *Towards Theorizing a Worlded Vision of Transpacific Ecopoetics*

Rob Wilson

#### Planet Ocean

Disturbed, muddy with conflict, vexed by latent animosities of history and regional struggle, the South China Sea has become “Asia’s Roiling Sea” as a *New York Times* editorial has elaborated the stakes and danger: “The sea is not only an important trade route but is also rich in oil, natural gas, fishing and mineral resources. Nations are fighting over islands and even specks of rocks to stake their claims.” These Pacific Rim islands and their adjoining national territories and coasts—from China, Taiwan, and Japan to Malaysia, Vietnam, Brunei, Korea, and the Philippines—are once again getting caught up in the roiling waters of geopolitical power struggle. For the ocean, past and present, remains unamenable to territorial demarcations of national border or marine sovereignty. This larger geo-territorial struggle presumes what is now called “the competition for dominance in the Asia-Pacific region” over which the United States, since World War II, has maintained uneasy hegemony. “The Pacific is big enough for all of us,” blithely declared US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton at the 2012 Pacific Forum in Suva, which did not satisfy China, not to mention the smaller interior Pacific countries wary of such unifying Rimspeak.<sup>1</sup> The ocean as a space of planetary interconnection remains riddled with these antagonisms of political, territorial, and commercial conflict.

At the same time, the ocean, figured as a planetary element necessary to sustaining life and earthly well-being, could become a means to envision ecological solidarity and planetary concern. To do so, however, the ocean would have to be reframed in terms that elicit consent and inspire an imagination of co-belonging, mutual interest, and ecopoetic care. The ocean could come to signify a bioregional site of coalitional *promise* as much as a geopolitical danger zone of antagonistic *peril*, as this chapter will explore. But for this to happen, we need to see ourselves as oceanic citizens as much as earth-dwellers connected in a Gaia-like wholeness: such authors of oceanic ecopoetics from Gary Snyder and Epeli Hau’ofa to Craig Santos-Perez and Juliana Spahr can help to disturb the environmental unconsciousness and



historical amnesia that too often reign across the Pacific. We need to push towards what Masao Miyoshi called, in a quasi-prophetic essay at the end of his collection *Trespases*, a vision of environmental commonality that would help overcome differences and conflict: Miyoshi calls this emergent vision of the “global environment” a “planet-based totality.”<sup>2</sup> The ocean needs to figure in a more *worlded* vision of planetary totality set at the core of a transnationalized cultural studies de- and remapping these oceanic entanglements.<sup>3</sup>

“Earth is a misnomer. The planet should be called Ocean,” Ed DeLong has urged along these world-altering lines, registering a marine microbiologist’s sensibility for the ocean as shared planetary fluid that comprises some 90 percent of our biosphere.<sup>4</sup> Threatened with techno-human endangerment and systemic distortion as in the effects of global warming, the ocean calls out for a broader planetary reckoning as species origin, instrument, analogue, and end. As Steve Mentz has declared in his call for a “blue cultural studies,” literature can help us to see how the ocean has been figured forth both “as a challenge to empirical understanding on the one hand, and seeing it as a divine Absolute, a God-space that humankind can see but not understand on the other.”<sup>5</sup> Whales, dolphins, coral reefs, and marine appeal for a more worlded sense of co-dwelling that connects beings across various scales of lung/brain/blood/water/air linkage. “This connection of everyone with lungs” is how American poet Juliana Spahr puts this imperiled planetary wholeness of land and ocean, tracing forces of biopolitical relationship across the militarized waters and polluted airs that extend from the United States Pacific Command centered at Pearl Harbor in Hawai‘i to the Manhattan ruins of the Atlantic post-9/11.<sup>6</sup>

Juliana Spahr’s frame-shifting book *Well Then There Now* (2011) offers another work of experimental ecopoetics, trenchantly oceanic in the way it situates Hawai‘i (as well as Manhattan as an Atlantic island) not just in relation to the Native Hawaiian sovereignty struggle and “local literature” multiculturalist movements but also in relation to global forces like arctic melting, species extinction, and resource extraction.<sup>7</sup> Spahr challenges the first-person plural “we” of Robert Frost’s manifest-destiny territorialism from his canonical poem “The Gift Outright,” showing how US-centric claims such as “this land was ours before we were the land’s” fall apart in relation to an occupied native space in Oceania like Hawai‘i.<sup>8</sup> But, more broadly, Spahr offers a trans-oceanic vision of planetary interconnection, indicting her own and “our” consumptive and polluting patterns from Ohio to O‘ahu to Manhattan: “They often lived on an island in the Pacific and they often lived on an island in the Atlantic. **Lake Chubsucker.** They thought of these two residences of theirs as opposites although both were places of great economic privilege and resources, places that themselves consumed large amounts of resources and consumed more and more resources all the time. **Lake Sturgeon.**”<sup>9</sup> The “unnamed dragonfly species” and myriad fish are named as endangered species, threatened with death by us-and-them binaries, local and global ties, near and far relations that are overlain, or “Things of each possible relation hashing against one another,” as

she names this systemic process of interconnection in another poem.<sup>10</sup> Land and ocean frames clash and yet (as she puts it) *hash together* as discrepant perspectives endangering the planet, and thus call out for a multi-relational trans-scalar vision of commonality that could inform a remapped “transnational American studies.”

Still, as Carl Schmitt had argued during the global struggles for space and place in the Nazi-led Germany of World War II, “Man is a terrestrial, a groundling,” a being whose deeply inscribed *nomos* of modernity measures social belonging in terrestrial-territorial terms long tied to an international nation-state system since the Treaty of Westphalia.<sup>11</sup> We derive our very sense of position and horizon, our poise, figure, and height from earth-dwelling not to mention the earth-burial of the body.<sup>12</sup> Schmitt posits our primordial commitment to earth in a study of spatial regimes called *Land and Sea* (1942), wherein he tracks the modern sense of “planetary space” and feeling for global unity to oceanic foundations initiated in the European imperial expansion into the Americas and across the Pacific into Asia. Venice, Portugal and Spain, Holland, then England, and, lastly, the transoceanic United States have mastered commercial and military sea power as a mode of taking transborder dominion. Such countries were extending earthly modes of earthly belonging into less easily inscribed watery realms that can blur, flow, and overcome mapped borders and mess up coastlines.<sup>13</sup> It is this oceanic mastery that figures from Hegel to Alfred Mahan saw as central to shaping world power down to the aerial mastery of World War II.<sup>14</sup> It is this drive to spatial domination for military and commercial purposes that compels others to posit, narrate and imagine into solidarity other, more non-imperial, archipelagic, oceanic, or postcolonial modes of “worlding the Pacific” across what has come to be called Oceania.<sup>15</sup>

Postmodern citizens dwell all the more so in a *liquid modernity* that can allow capital and power to slip, elide and bypass older forms of territorial containment or marine sovereignty.<sup>16</sup> Given our mediated instantaneity and the transborder fluidity of internet connectivity, we “surf” in a transoceanic cyberspace of global interconnection. Increasingly dematerialized as such cyberspace beings, we exist on the verge of “forgetting the [material] sea” as a site of co-belonging, resistance, and co-history, as Allan Sekula documents in pictorially uncanny works like *Fish Story* (1995) and *The Forgotten Space* (2011).<sup>17</sup> The living ocean, in many sites, still remains the *unthought* as such. We can forget this material-semiotic ocean even dwelling on a Pacific Rim that houses some thirteen of the twenty largest container ports in the world from Hong Kong to Long Beach.<sup>18</sup> That is to say, we can forget the ocean in an urban life-world that depends for its material well-being on the ocean. Living in cities on landed edges, we can unconsciously still trope the sea as *alien other*, as a quasi-scriptural antagonist of mythic threat, as some negative or abjected space of the void or oblivion that threatens earthly power.<sup>19</sup> The sea still figures as some murky blue-green abyss gestating monsters from inhuman depths linking Job’s Leviathan and Melville’s *Moby-Dick* to Hollywood movies like *Aliens of the Deep* (2005) if not the deformed byproduct of our chemical transpacific waste in

the South Korean movie (linking Seoul's Han River to the military pollutions of the American Pacific), in Bong Joon-Ho's *The Host* (2006). Guillermo del Toro's oceanic monster movie is called *Pacific Rim* (2013), and the ocean figures as a disruptive site where transnational military forces in "various capitalist modes of production" from the United States, China, Japan, Russia, and Australia have to band together, in a techno-rich Hong Kong, to fend off the post-Godzilla *kaiju* from the alien deeps of nuclear or ecological disaster.<sup>20</sup>

Stefan Helmreich, in his far-reaching study of microbial oceanography, *Alien Ocean*, has elaborated what he calls a "dual imaginary" of romantic and scientific ambivalence towards these planetary waters: the ocean is both *trouble to us* (as with tsunamis or climate change) and *in trouble from us* (as in our Pacific garbage patch or overfishing). The ocean remains an uncanny yet familiar presence of elemental sublimity: a natural immensity at once threatening and a "source of its own curative powers."<sup>21</sup> Helmreich's main focus is upon deep-sea microbes as ecological protagonists that can eat up the potent greenhouse gas, methane, we overproduce.<sup>22</sup> We try to map this ocean with treaties and legal conventions rooted in straight lines, contracts, and bounded spaces. But these market-based projections of Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) regulated by the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) fail to achieve lasting consensual dominion, as in the current dispute over a chain of uninhabited islands in the East China Sea known as the Diaoyu Islands in China and the Senkakus in Japan, or similar disputes over the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea.<sup>23</sup> "China thinks of the South China Sea much as the U.S. thinks of the Caribbean: as a blue-water extension of its mainland," as Robert D. Kaplan argues from geopolitical perspective, recalling the primacy of nation-stratified geography to conflicts of land and sea even amid all the collapsing of spatial distances via the internet.<sup>24</sup>

This is what I mean by here figuring the Ocean "as peril": that is, *an ocean endangering us and endangered by us*. This sea of marketized dominion and/or alien obliviousness can flip over and become the site of human waste disposal, excess, remainder, abduction, resonant with oil spills, plastics, and radioactive contaminants. World ocean waters do remember, as it were; they remain filled with the heaviness of our military history and technological blunders.<sup>25</sup> From the Bikini atoll horrors of US atomic testing which produced nuclear refugees from island-home sites of indigenous displacement, to the radiation effects of Chernobyl across Russia, to the latest techno-nuclear disaster in Fukushima Japan in 2011, the military-industrial apparatus threatens not just the water and air of the region but the whole Pacific Rim as a planetary bioregion. As the tsunami reminded Pacific dwellers from Sendai in coastal Eastern Japan to Santa Cruz in Northern California, the Pacific Rim is not just a discourse or trope of transnational market-fusion or national defense, it is a geologically interactive bioregion fundamentally as well. As one of hundreds picking up the debris from the Japanese tsunami in waters off the Pacific Northwest coast a year later remarked, "I'm constantly struck by the idea

that this is a very small planet. Something that happens on the other side of the ocean has become something you can see and touch in your backyard. It's a pretty powerful thing."<sup>26</sup>

*Alien Ocean* would move beyond what has been called the “red ocean” of bio-prospecting competitors battling for priority in techno-space into what *Harvard Business Review* authors W. Chan Kin and Renee Mauborgne would target as the “blue ocean strategy” of uncontested market space: some transnational dream of deterritorialized markets full of liquid capital and biogenetic profit.<sup>27</sup> Evoking the salt waters around Hawai‘i as “a vision of the ocean as endlessly generative [that] mimes and anchors a conception of biology as always overflowing with (re) productivity,” Helmreich calls this form of marine bioprospecting a mode of “*blue-green capitalism*, where blue stands for speculative sky-high promise and green for a belief in biological fecundity.”<sup>28</sup> The blue of the Pacific begins to glow with the green of money if not the red of the dispossessed or ruined. As in the techno-filmic sublimity of James Cameron, ocean becomes a resource of untapped bio-capital, instantiating what Helmreich calls “the cyberspatialized Pacific Rim [mined] as an extension of an unfettered American frontier economy and as a site where capital meets its Western limits only to find openings into Eastern markets; capitalism become a sea serpent, ringing the world, eating its regenerating tail.”<sup>29</sup> This is “Pacific Rim discourse” gone wild, fused with oceanic biotech hyperbole and transnational futurism: Helmreich heard the mayor of Honolulu speaking it and Asia-Pacific planners buying into it at the Fourth Asia Pacific Marine Biotechnology Conference in 2002.

World oceans cannot long bear this red, blue, green, and “*ultraviolet capital*” coloration, “where extremophiles that survive ionizing radiation become intriguing candidates for [a] cosmic biotechnology” that knows no Club of Rome limits.<sup>30</sup> The floor of Monterey Bay in Northern California, Pacific site where Ed DeLong conducts his marine biology research, has become a one-ton layer of human discards—meaning artillery shells, fishing lines, bottles, and plastic remainders—despite vigilant efforts of environmental forces and agencies. *The* apocalyptic image of ocean endangerment remains that of a global installation in the “ocean commons” created by overproductive waste and ecological unconsciousness we share on both sides of the Pacific. This is what is now called the *Great Pacific Garbage Patch*: a gyre of plasticene detritus twice the size of Texas and weighing some 100 million tons that lies just below ocean surface between California, Hawai‘i, and Japan (the Northern Pacific Gyre). This oceanic-slime image of the postmodern sublime is being formed out of our throwaway bottles, chemical sludge, and polymers that are harmful to marine wildlife.<sup>31</sup>

Such “ecopoetic” images of catastrophic oceanic sublimity could be multiplied: the Tuvalu Islands disappearing due to global warming and rising tides, the military buildup and damages ongoing from Guam to the Persian Gulf, the melting Pacific arctic, the mounting typhoons of Taiwan, the nuclear waste waters of Japan. They might help move urban-oceanic citizens of postmodernity into a vision of Oceania

as a site of Asia-Pacific transnational solidarity. By “transpacific ecopoetics” in my subtitle, this is what I would move towards as “the promise” of an Ocean (building upon the trope of Oceania) connected to a vision of altered transnational belonging, ecological confederation, and transracial solidarity.

In *Be Always Converting, Be Always Converted: An American Poetics* (2009), I proposed a postcolonial figure of oceanic conversion that is widely taking place around the crucial Tongan writer and social scientist Epeli Hau’ofa, for whom Christian conversion became refigured as a polytheistic form and transmuted into an ecumenical frame via his ocean-affiliated metamorphosis of belief.<sup>32</sup> The visionary Hau’ofa (1939–2009) turns away from the telos of capitalist hyper-development that has gotten the modern ocean into the trouble it is in as “Great Pacific Garbage Patch” ecoscape. For Hau’ofa, Oceania in effect becomes a transracial and transnational way of refiguring the Pauline universality of address for the island peoples across the Pacific for whom, he laments and critiques, globalization discourse hails these smaller nations into market dependency and subaltern labor, thus putting their lands, waters, and recourses into planetary jeopardy. Playing off the pidgin vernacular framing of Oceania as “wansolwara” (one salt water), this becomes Hau’ofa’s postcolonial tactic of shedding regional visions of the Pacific such as “The South Seas,” “Australasia,” “South Pacific” “Pacific Basin” or merely the “Pacific Islands.”<sup>33</sup> All these quasi-colonial frames of geography, archive, epistemology, and place are now giving way to Oceania as the self-identified signifier of trans-Native Pacific choice and ontological belonging to the ocean world.<sup>34</sup> Hau’ofa’s capacious vision is founded in the trope of a “one salt water” Pacific.<sup>35</sup>

Hau’ofa’s ecumene for Pacific coalition-building is called “Oceania” and its poetic vagary of definition becomes a resignifying form of unity through which Polynesian, Micronesian, and Melanesian and all such colonial-imposed definitions of race or nationhood could be sloughed off like dead boundary lines, false confinements into smallness, irrelevance, and global dependency. Oceania was originally a French geographical term coined in 1831 by the French explorer Dumont d’Urville, “l’Océanie,” and is nowadays the name for one of eight planetary eco-zones on the Earth. Hau’ofa framed his rebirth along a postcolonial road leading from Damascus to Kona and Volcano on the Big Island. He went on writing (until his death in 2009 in Fiji) about this hope-generating turn back to native gods, goddesses, and art and away from globalization models of smallness, lack, or belatedness in the Pacific. *Ecumene* is drawn from the Greco-Roman world where it meant “the inhabited part of the earth.” World geographers now use it to stand for populated sites. *Ecumene/ecumenical* are terms used by religious forces (since the ancient time of Roman Catholic dispensation) to stand for promoting unity and cooperation across divisions of faith.<sup>36</sup> Epeli gives his “ecumene” a watery turn, reflecting an oceanic way of belonging to the world: “Oceania” becomes a regional framework whose center is everywhere in the interior Pacific and whose circumference on the edges of the Pacific is not so fixed or certain, from its early use (which included Australia



and New Zealand) to later iterations (which at times excludes Asia *in toto*, as I will problematize below).<sup>37</sup>

*Ecumene*, as we recall from Gary Snyder's early poetic usage, is related to the later term "ecology," the "earth household" (as Snyder tropes its etymology) of using water and land, economy and planet as a mode of planetary belonging. Snyder writes in "Notes on Poetry as an Ecological Survival Tool" in 1969, "Ecology: 'eco' (*oikos*) meaning 'house' (cf. 'ecumenical'): Housekeeping on Earth. Economics, which is merely the housekeeping of various social orders—[not] taking out more than it puts back—must learn the rules of the greater [planetary] realm."<sup>38</sup> Hau'ofa's "Oceania" serves as a catholic (small c) universal, boundary-shattering ecumene of Pacific Ocean belonging, implying a kind of shared *housekeeping on Ocean*. Stories, images, art, dance, and legends give a deeper sense of Pacific co-belonging; long-woven networks of interconnected reciprocity prove crucial to this formation across the Western and Asian Pacific, as islands and oceans are connected, link, and would counter the late-capitalist world from before, within, and after it.

### Transformations in "Asia Pacific" Knowledge Formations

Reflecting modes of techno-interconnectivity and global mobility from above and below, regions are becoming reframed via more fluid forms of relationship and interconnection like "Oceania," "Inter-Asia," "Asia/Pacific," "the new Europe" so called, or the "circum-Mediterranean" than previous area studies had allowed. In his essay "Asia Pacific Studies in an Age of Global Modernity" published in *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* (2005)—a journal in which this multisited region transformation of "Asia Pacific" has been taking place since its founding in 1999—Arif Dirlik provides an overview of transformations of field imaginaries in Asia and the Pacific since the late 1980s.<sup>39</sup> Dirlik and I were coeditors of a special issue of *boundary 2* called "Asia/Pacific as Space of Cultural Production" that appeared with Duke University Press and posited linkages and discrepancies between these two areas, at the same time it placed Asia and Pacific areas in rhizomatic, interlinked, trans-disciplinary, and trans-spatial dialogue.<sup>40</sup> As the introduction to *Asia/Pacific as Space of Cultural Production* urged, "The all-but-reified 'Asia-Pacific' formulated by market planners and military strategists is inadequate to describe or explain the fluid and multiple 'Asia/Pacific' . . . The slash would signify linkage yet difference." "Asia-Pacific," with the solicitous hyphen of APEC, weights the Pacific towards Asia as a source of motions in labor, capital, and culture as we surveyed it. Asia slash Pacific (*Asia/Pacific*) can also mean opening the region to alternative formations, "as [this] Asia/Pacific region enacts the reconfigured space of nation-state deterritorialization, reinvention, struggle, and flight as power leaks out of the Cold War binary-machine."<sup>41</sup>

In "Asia Pacific Studies in an Age of Global Modernity," Dirlik points to *five* overlapping "trends" that have arisen, following upon the crisis of area studies

and the dismantling of Cold War rationales, what Kuan-Hsing Chen calls “de-Cold-Warization”<sup>42</sup> across Asia and the Pacific: (1) civilizational studies; (2) the Asianization of Asian studies; (3) indigenous studies; (4) oceanic studies; and (5) diasporic studies. While Dirlik sees the first three as “continuous with [area studies and nation-based formations] in terms of fundamental spatial assumptions” of borders and fields mapped via nations in areas (161), he goes on to discuss *oceanic* and *diasporic* studies as representing “novel spatialities” that have arisen to challenge and assert alternatives to Cold War area studies models that had solidified during and after World War II.<sup>43</sup>

“Oceanic studies,” while related to Pacific Rim studies of transpacific capitalism in Asia-Pacific and other world-ocean sites, can serve discrepant global and local interests. As Dirlik phrases this dialectic, “Oceans may represent projections of place-based indigenous ideals into space, as they do for Epeli Hau’ofa, or they may be used to promote an APEC version of space in the service of capital and [transnationalizing] states.”<sup>44</sup> To invoke “Oceania” as opposed to the imperialized Pacific Ocean/Pacific Region implies that there is a “salutary absence of a naturalized homogeneous ‘identity’” to this name Pacific, as Gayatri Spivak has observed in her own turn to embrace a related mode of “critical regionalism” in *Other Asias* implied to Asia.<sup>45</sup> Spivak moves “to ‘pluralize’ Asia” in all its discrepant histories and power differentials, so as “to build [or world] another Asia” than that form of worlding resonant with imperial or hegemonic power.<sup>46</sup> Oceania, like “other Asias,” becomes another way of figuring the Ocean in the Pacific in a more transpacific coalitional way that opens towards an ecopoetics of co-belonging that is not just identity-based but oceanic and planetary as a poetics and politics.<sup>47</sup>

No Asia or Pacific region-making framework can remain innocent of uneven power dynamics, historical elisions, bordered exclusions, discrepancies, or aporias of place-making. *Oceania* as such—full of the Maori poet Robert Sullivan’s *wakas*<sup>48</sup> and the Chamorro-American poet Craig Santos Perez’s *sakman*<sup>49</sup> as well as those 350-meter long containerized diesel ships from Matson and Evergreen to STX, with such ships losing some 10,100 containers each year at sea—offers no postcolonial kava-pill of forgetting for the lasting effects of war, militarization, racial tension, or the dynamics of neoliberal globalization reshaping space, time, self, or world.<sup>50</sup> Such historical antagonisms remain and disturb any vision of this Asia/Pacific ocean as “worlding” commons.<sup>51</sup>

### Asia Sublates the Pacific

Unmaking colonial modes with raucous satire, Hau’ofa’s fictional writing is done in the post-British “many Englishes” of Polynesia, “alter Englishes,” which are creolized and pidginized. Still, Hau’ofa’s works often demonize, mock, or exclude contemporary Asians as such from having an affirmative claim upon, or role in, the construction of this alternative Oceania of ecological belonging. In *Tales of the Tikongs*,

Japanese corporate forces are linked to the Pacific Rim operators from Australia and New Zealand. “The Pacific Way belongs to regional Elites . . .”, building cars too small for hefty Tikong people and a tuna cannery that ends in disarray in “The Tower of Babel.”<sup>52</sup> Gaming parlors of Taipei and sex shops of Tokyo and Sydney conspire to turn Tiko into “the South Pacific Haven for Gambling and Prostitution.” Pacific developers like Ole turn to “regional [money] laundry centers” in Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur, Manila, Suva, and Moumea” to learn how to do this higher mode of Asia-Pacific exploitation. *Kisses in the Nederends* centers around New Age modes of duping, tranquillizing, and conning the indigenous Pacific body of Oilei Bomboki via that sage, yogi, and conman of Asian capitalist yoga and libidinal love, Babu Vivekanand.<sup>53</sup>

In “The Ocean in Us,” an essay in *We Are the Ocean* based on the Oceania lecture delivered to the University of the South Pacific in Suva in 1997 as ecological keynote address, Hau’ofa pushes towards forms of ecological solidarity. “And for a new Oceania to take hold,” he urges, “it must have a solid dimension of commonality that we can perceive with our senses. Culture and nature are inseparable. The Oceania that I see is a creation of people in all walks of life.” Earlier, debating who belongs to this new Oceania, Hau’ofa urges in the same essay, “Oceania refers to a world of people connected to each other. . . . As far as I am concerned, anyone who has lived in our region and is committed to Oceania is an Oceanian.” Belonging to Oceania becomes a matter of political and cultural commitment: Oceania means not only having a sense of history and cultivating a set of attitudes and beliefs, it means cultivating a sense of belonging to the earth and ocean as a bioregional horizon of care. But, later in the same essay, Hau’ofa goes on to claim that in this Oceania “Asian mainland influences were largely absent until the modern era,” and that more specifically speaking, “Pacific Ocean islands, from Japan through the Philippines and Indonesia, which are adjacent to the Asian mainland, do not have oceanic cultures and are therefore not part of Oceania” (53). In other words, Asians at times can be *excluded* by history, tradition, and territorial site from belonging to this new Oceania. Questions haunt the Pacific and Asia: can Asia become part of Oceania, can Oceania become the basis of a broader environmental collation, or can Oceania alter hegemonic “Pacific Rim” or “Asia Pacific” frameworks?<sup>54</sup>

This view of Asia sublating the interior Pacific, positioned outside of Oceania as a shared etho-political ecoscape, is not uncommon in a range of works and genres. Teresia Teaiwa, in her poem “Amnesia” from *Tereneisa* (2000) coperformed with Sia Figiel, captures such a Pacific-evacuating Asia-Pacific, when she writes: “They’re after American Pie in the East and some kind of Zen in the West . . . So it’s easy to forget that there’s life and love and learning / between Asia and America.”<sup>55</sup> In *The Shark that Ate the Sun*, John Pule sees an Asian base-linked Pacific turn into an “American Lake” for the American navy linking “ships in Samoa / Hawaii, Taiwan, Philippines, / Belau, Kwajelein, Truk / The Marianas, the Carolines,” a security chain in which “the dead [as at the Bikini Atoll] are louder in protest than the living.”<sup>56</sup>



In “Shrinking the Pacific,” the Japanese American poet Lawson Inada imagines a shrunken, water-displaced Pacific Rim across which global travelers can “take the gleaming bridge / and bop into and around Hokkaido for lunch. // Maybe stay the night, or come back to Oregon, / which, by now is full of Hokkaido tourists” or neighbors, hard to tell anymore in this unified Asia-Pacific.<sup>57</sup> Joe Balaz, in a poem published in the web journal *Otoliths*, depicts a Waikiki become a shopping-mall carnival of fake cultures and clownish versions of indigeneity, commodified like a “Polynesian Hong Kong”:

it’s a hootenanny  
and a hoedown  
if you’re on da top  
and you pull da strings  
on all da puppet clowns.<sup>58</sup>

This is a global capitalist framework of simulation spun around “Asia-Pacific” that depends upon a kind of “Disneyfication” of identity writ large, as Fredric Jameson allegorizes this postmodern “ethnicity-effect” for global tourist consumption.<sup>59</sup>

To be sure, much more resistance to such forms and mores is taking place in the Asian and Pacific “worlding” dynamics of cultural production and site-based work. In postcolonial Taiwan, a whole school of cultural studies work is arising which links Taiwan native studies to Native American transnational frameworks of outernational and “trans-indigenous” belonging on the one hand; and on the other to a contemporary connection with oceanic frameworks that would unsettle territorial ties to the Chinese mainland and reframe this decentered island site as long connected to the Pacific Ocean. In an essay on these oceanic ties in Taiwan through the work of Tau poet from Orchid Island (long part of Austronesian culture and site of antinuclear protests in the 1980s), Syaman Rapongan, in works like *Cold Sea, Deep Passion* (1997) and *Black Wings* (1999), Hsinya Huang urges,

Through their own lived experience, as well as that of their island kin, Epli Hau’ofa and Syaman Rapongan conceive of Oceania as a communal (sea) body, through which they can ultimately resist the imaginary political lines drawn by colonial powers. Their narratives turn hyper-modernized Pacific islanders (like themselves) back towards a perception of bodily identities as individual projects in intimate connection with Oceania.<sup>60</sup>

Hsinya Huang links Rapongan with the vision of Hau’ofa, who (as in essays like “The Ocean in Us”) “represents Oceanic peoples as custodians of the sea, who ‘reach out to similar people elsewhere in the common task of protecting the seas for the general welfare of all living things.’”<sup>61</sup> Rapongan’s work in *Black Wings* on Oceania in the North Eastern Pacific envisions an archipelagic region reshaping Taiwan as space linked to Austronesian (if not Polynesian) modes of language, space, body, and culture:

What does the “world atlas” mean? A chain of islands in Oceania. The islanders share common ideals, savoring a freedom on the sea. On their own sea and the sea of other neighboring islands, they are in quest of the unspoken and unspeakable passion toward the ocean or maybe in quest of the words passed down from their ancestors.<sup>62</sup>

Albert Saijo’s post-Beat, pidgin “vandalized,” Zen-and-Emerson-haunted ecological rhapsody, *OUTSPEAKS*, published by Bamboo Ridge Press (1997), forges what he calls an alternative “cosmovision” of place, ocean, and planet from his residency ‘living on the edge’ of the Pacific near Hapu’u Forest in Volcano on the Big Island.<sup>63</sup> The *kolea* or golden plover becomes his figure of an oceanic traveler, living on scraps and edges, who forges at once a line of flight and a mode of frugal inhabiting in “A Kona.”<sup>64</sup> Identifying not as an ethnic Asian settler but as a “REBORN HUMAN” of world ecology, Saijo urges his credo of the small and caring life of hiking and sustenance living as beautiful.<sup>65</sup> As he summarizes his poetics and life dwelling close to the wilderness and his poetic and Buddhist quest (in the mode of Gary Snyder and Lew Welch) for embodied beatitude in self and world: “EDGING AN ACTIVE VOLCANO—LIKE THEY SAY IF YER NOT LIVIN ON THE EDGE YER TAKIN UP TOO MUCH SPACE.”<sup>66</sup>

Two book-length contemporary poems by Craig Santos Perez enact an innovative and historically informed feat of repossessing Oceania and the Marianas, as a mode of world-belonging in which Guam/Guahan can never be named (or forgotten as) another unincorporated territory of the post-1898 American Pacific. Resisting Guam’s being the “Pacific hub to Asia” and being referred to in the region as “USS Guam,” to use a powerful example of Asia and Pacific remapping, Perez resists the centuries-long Spanish and US *reduccion* process of “subduing, converting, and gathering natives through the establishment of missions and the stationing of soldiers to protect those missions.”<sup>67</sup> Guam as a militarized island with (as Robert Duncan saw it) “planes [forever] roaring out from Guam over Asia,” would turn the Americanized Pacific into “a sea of toiling men,” “a bloated thing” of war, dispossession, and exploitation.<sup>68</sup> But these poems (tied in transpacific tidelands to the experimental writings of *Tinfish* in Honolulu and the Bay Area open poetics of Robert Duncan, Rob Halpern, Barbara Jane Reyes et al.) proliferate counter-namings and trace precarious routes and roots on Guahan, resulting in a whole counter-geography of archipelagic belonging to Oceania and the Marianas as more than an act “to prove the ocean / was once a flag” (*hacha* 47). Dispossessed by Spanish of natives seafaring tools and boats of “tasi” (the ocean or sea) like the flying *proas* or the *sakman* (long-voyaging canoe) and thus prevented from interisland travel, “the chamorros themselves were by this time [1780s] no longer a people of the sea” (quoting *Destiny’s Landfall* by Robert Rogers, *hacha* 74), and Guam was called “omiya jima” (great shrine island) by the Japanese in World War II.

Dispossession leads to the poet using Chamorro as a “drowned / anguage” returning in fragments and broken phrases and renaming of plants and things

and history. At the same time, eight thousand marines will be transferred to Guam from Okinawa by 2014 through a joint effort of the US and Japan (*hacha* 91). And, ecological miscreant, the brown tree snake which first reached war-torn Guam as World War II cargo ship stowaway has increased exponentially and led to declining bird populations and other losses of native animals, as illegal dumpsites proliferate. Like his fellow Pacific-based poets Robert Sullivan and Brandy Nālani McDougall, Perez enacts an oceanic poetics: the poems, like its rooted and routed people, must begin again in salt water and sub-surface groundings and waterings, tracing ‘one salt water’ across different parts of the Pacific. “What the map cuts up,” as Michel de Certeau puts this quest, “the story cuts across,” as the poet works in a diaspora of open-field or circum-oceanic poetics (he has lived in Northern California since his family moved there in 1995) to tell the broken story, in shards, remainders, space-time constellations of place, family, and hand-me-down story.<sup>69</sup> It’s Oceania as reconvened to put the water-land nexus back into pre- and postcolonial focus, via a resurrected spatiality of four languages.

As Perez writes, acknowledging borrowings from Charles Olson as well as from Hau’ofa in his oceanic “field composition” poems, “Hau’ofa draws our attention to an oceania, préoceania, and transoceania surrounding islands, below the waves, and in the sky—a deeper geography and mythology”<sup>70</sup> (*hacha*, 63). The poet does not just proclaim this New Oceania, he re-creates this region in performative worldings in his poems. He also quotes from Robert Sullivan’s poem, “Ocean Birth,” “every song to remind us— / we are skin of the ocean,” and from Muriel Rukeyser’s “The Outer Banks,” “All is open. / Open water. Open I” making fixities break down and fuse, link across imposed divides of subjected verb, “open” into world-making and I-breaking action.

The Asia of these poems by Perez is also seen as an exploitative one, wherein well-off South Koreans arrive to give birth to children who become guaranteed US citizens as promoted by “birth tour agencies.”<sup>71</sup> Postwar tourists begin to pour in from the Rim, particularly Japan, with its ties of war and colonial settlement: “1967: 109 passengers on pan am flight 801 from haneda, japan arrive; ‘japanese rediscover guam’” as “*ginen* sourcings” grimly puts the timeline, by 1973 a quarter of a million tourists come to Guam, 70 percent Japanese. The numbered sections of the poem all have Japanese numbers embedded in them, along with English and Chamorro and Spanish, *ichi to go*. The rebranding of Guam as “world class tourist destination” and hotels “all with ocean views” continues, as a function of what Teresia Teaiwa calls the “militourist” mode of space-production in the Pacific for Asian and Euro-American fulfillment. Even as the grandmother’s rosary ties the Pacific together in grassroots beatitude and oceanic crossings, “when I say rosary [in Chamorro] I think I can hear her voice / even here in California.”<sup>72</sup>

Across six postwar decades and transpacific contexts, Gary Snyder has forged a coherent eco-poetics from *Earth House Hold* (1969) to the present, as gathered in *A Place in Space: Ethics, Aesthetics, and Watersheds* (1995). Snyder has long posited

the regenerative power of wilderness, what he calls “the practice of the wild,” as well as deep ties of the Pacific Rim to the powers of emplaced consciousness and “re-inhabitory” energies in the wilderness as connected to cities like San Francisco and Seattle. In Snyder’s reframing of the coastal Pacific in “Coming into the Watershed,” an essay that has become crucial to the field of American ecological criticism, “The San Francisco / valley rivers / Shasta headwaters bio-city region” are all interconnected and lead to an ethical attitude of gratitude and planetary care for “Turtle Island.”<sup>73</sup>

Snyder renames this bio-community from his base in the Kitkitdizze Sierras bioregion, a “Shasta Nation.”<sup>74</sup> Here regenerative energies of the wild and the sense of planetary belonging can lead Euro-Americans, Asian Americans, African Americans and North Beach dharma bums on a shared, re-worlding path to “become ‘born-again’ natives of Turtle Island.”<sup>75</sup> His vision assumes an ecologically interconnected and re-nativized counter-conversion to place. In his essay on urban place, “North Beach” from *The Old Ways: Six Essays* (1977), the poet enacts a bio-poetics of the Bay Area region as “contado” and as counter-culture. San Francisco North Beach is portrayed as a “non-Anglo” multicultural habitat, where the Costanoan native people had lived for over five thousand years around the Bay, which later became a place of Alta Californian dairy farms, before waves of Irish, Italian, Sicilian, Portuguese, Chinese (Kwang-tung and Hakka) and “even Basque shepherders down from Nevada” settled in.<sup>76</sup> Beneath the Transamerica Pyramid, Snyder conjures “a tiny watershed divide at the corner of Green and Columbus” where “northward a creek flowed” towards the Fisherman’s Wharf, all covered by oblivious landfill now.<sup>77</sup> By evoking remnants of the Pacific bioregion and its occluded presence due to settlement in the Pacific Rim city, Snyder aims at “hatching something else in America; pray it cracks the shell in time” (“North Beach,” 6). That “something else” is a Pacific bioregion that sees place connected to watersheds, oceans, and place-tied values that comprise an ecopoetics drawing from cultures of Native America, Asia, and the Pacific.

In *Earth House Hold* (1969), Gary Snyder ends his poetic-didactic journey out of Cold War US formations and into alter-worlding constructions of place, self, beatitude, and being in Asia and the Pacific (linking sites in Japan, India, Tonga, “Cold Mountain” China, and the Pacific Northwest) by forming the Banyan Ashram on Suwa-No-Se Island in the Amami groups of islands that continue from Okinawa and the Ryukyus to Taiwan.<sup>78</sup> This ashram, led by the amazing poet and dharma Buddhist wanderer Nanao Sakaki of works like *Break the Mirror* (1987), cultivates ties to place and ocean through small-scale farming and fishing, “offering shochu to the gods of the volcano, the ocean, and the sky,” and in oceanic bonding for nourishment, “For some fish you must become one with the sea and consider yourself a fish among fish.”<sup>79</sup>

Meditating, farming, fishing, dancing, chanting, getting married to person and place, Snyder and his wife Masa and their mentor Sakaki push their transpacific

journey towards an ontology of wider world-belonging, situating Japan in an Oceanic framework: “It is possible at last for Masa and me to imagine a little of what the ancient—archaic—mind and life of Japan were. And to see what could be restored to the life today” (*Earth House Hold*, 143). Snyder will work to bring this ecological and etho-political stance I have been calling “ecopoetics” back across the Pacific in works of global / local affects like *Turtle Island* (1974), *Regarding Wave* (1970), *Mountains and Rivers Without End* (1996) and ecological-poetics, *A Place in Space* (1995). As Iain Sinclair has remarked of Snyder’s long-cultivated vision of ecology, poetics, and place as “the Pacific Rim dream of a natural paradise,” “[t]he marks are on him of a long and complex relationship with both sides of the Pacific Rim, a balance achieved.”<sup>80</sup>

We cannot and need not forget war, racism, colonialism, and neocolonial economic discrepancies in the magical waters of this new *Pacific-becoming-Oceania* or some recuperated animistic Eden on the Pacific Rim. Still, affiliation to Oceania in such writers and cultural producers can become not just a matter of heritage or blood, but be based around “a trope of commitment, vision, and will,” in the remaking of Asia and the Pacific.<sup>81</sup> This, in any event, is the *promise* offered by a responsible sense of shared ecopoetics and bioregion. Thinking with and beyond Epeli Hau’ofa’s vision, Oceania can become (a) a framework to help forge a vision of ecological solidarity; (b) the site of alternative modes of belonging inside Asia and the Pacific, reflecting Pacific and Asia linkage and knowledge formation; and (c) the oceanic imagination can prove helpful as a mode of transforming social and regional practices and help the making, shaping, and gathering of what I have been calling “a Transpacific Ecopoetics.” Literature (in writers like Spahr, Saijo, Santos Perez, Snyder et al.) can help us to see such links and affects between ocean, self, and planet. Cultural poetics can help us to overcome what Lawrence Buell has called “the foreshortened or inertial aspect of [the] environmental unconscious,” so that we can develop better modes of re-inhabitation and a “watershed consciousness” of an Oceania aware of our ties to rivers, tidal shores, and the global commons of the ocean.<sup>82</sup>

### Towards an Ecopoetics of Asia-Pacific Solidarity in Oceania

In his essay “Indigenous Articulations,” James Clifford reaches into the “articulation” theories of Stuart Hall and Antonio Gramsci to offer a multiple-edged model of Pacific region-making he calls “subaltern region-making.” Pacific indigenous peoples can compose, in this process, “a region cobbled together, articulated [with global forces], from the inside out, based on everyday practices that link islands with each other and with mainland diasporas.”<sup>83</sup> As in his first book on the “Melanesian world,” Clifford turns back to the work of Jean-Marie Tjibaou in New Caledonia and the Loyalty Islands “where a composite ‘Kanak’ identity was emerging in political struggle.” Such a vision of place, land, and identity as “inter-dependent” would



“also embrace the Pacific sea of islands—a wider world of cultural exchange and alliances that were always crucial for Tjibaou’s thinking about independence as inter-dependence,” as Clifford summarizes Tjibaou’s gesture towards the island land and sea (“*Mais, c’est ça la maison*”) as world home in Oceania.<sup>84</sup>

We can thicken the meanings and tactics of “Oceania” via a Pacific Island-based anthology called *Whetu Moana: Contemporary Polynesian Poems in English* (edited by Albert Wendt et al.) in which ten Hawaiian poets figure prominently: many of the poems are concerned not just with links to the people of “the ‘aina” (land) but to sustenance from, connections to, and wayfaring across “Oceania” (including ecologically oriented poems based in Hawaiian waters like “Spear Fisher” and “Da Last Squid” by Joe Balaz).<sup>85</sup> Crucially in 1976, and in waves of Pacific-crossing voyages since then, the Hawaiian voyaging project Hokule‘a began to reconnect the Polynesian triangle across Oceania and helped to create this interconnected ocean of star via native knowledge, techniques, and community building forms cutting across nations and colonizing prejudices. Such remappings of place and region, around Oceania, occur in Robert Sullivan’s *Star Waka* (1999) and the counter-geographies and indigenous ocean-making tactics of Craig Santos Perez in *from Unincorporated Territory [Hacha/saina]* (2008/2010) and [lukao] (2017), all three serial poetic works in his decolonizing of Guam series.

Invoking James Clifford’s evocation of New Caledonia as connecting place to ocean world, Gary Snyder’s oceanic ashram in Japan with Nanao Sakaki in *Earth House Hold* and *Jan Ken Po: Live in Honolulu*, Albert Saijo’s ocean-facing Big Island in *OUTSPEAKS*, Robert Sullivan’s eclectic waka-assemblages, and Taiwan’s re-nativizing turn into a counter-mainland site as aligned to Oceania in Hsinya Huang et al, I have been aiming to overcome the taken-for-granted view of *an Asia/Pacific imaginary* with Asian cultures and sites cast as transnational capital forces of globalization set relentlessly against the interior Pacific figured as raw resource, fantasy site, vacancy, and/or subaltern or diasporic labor. Aiming towards a multiple-edged vision of ecological solidarity in the region, “We [culture workers, critical theorists, teachers] can seek the antagonistic synergy of Asia/Pacific forces, flows, linkages, and networks.”<sup>86</sup> With wry wit and capacious-hearted humor Epeli Hau‘ofa often implied as much in his own first-person-plural evocations, as when he left that catholic “we” of oceanic solidarity open, under-specified in the summary title to his selected works, *We Are the Ocean*, thus capable of expansive coalition-building inside and across the Pacific and the world: *we are the ocean* indeed, in some ecological sense of body/place/world.

As Sylvia Earle wrote in *Time* magazine (in a 1996 article Hau‘ofa fondly cited to broaden the “we” claim of *We Are the Ocean*), “Every breath we take is possible because of the life-filled life-giving sea; oxygen is generated there, carbon dioxide absorbed . . . Most of Earth’s living space [its ecumene], the biosphere, is ocean—about 97%. And not so coincidentally 97% of Earth’s water is Ocean.”<sup>87</sup> We know from effects like El Niño and polar melting, the sea shapes weather and climate

patterns; and its moistures stabilize and replenish the fresh waters of rivers, lakes, and streams. *We are the Ocean* in our very bodies as well, each living person composed of some 60 percent to 70 percent water.

One last image from the interior Pacific—a haunting and primordial one of cultural endangerment and environmental peril yet of promise as well concerning the restorative power of ecopoetics: in a section called “Flows” in that *Asia/Pacific as Space of Cultural Production* collection from 1995, we included a translation by Theophil Saret Reuney of an ocean-based work from Truk (in the Federated States of Micronesia) called “The Pulling of Olap’s Canoe.”<sup>88</sup> The work itself, and its footnotes with coinages and gaps of untranslatability, comprises an oral cartography as an islands-ocean nexus full of place names, names for birds, whales, plants, waves, rocks, navigation customs, islands, specific species of Oceania, as in lines like “The whale whose names are Urasa and Pwourasa / They guard those pompano fish which belong to wasofo [a name for the new canoe, and by extension the new navigator].”

This Pacific poet-scholar has passed away. Theophil Reuney’s works are still used by linguists and biologists (like Alan E. Davis) to compile Chuukese names for plants and animals, and by Joachim Peter to forge an oceanic-based vision of horizon, world, and place: let us hope that these names and these creatures can survive our own planetary plundering.<sup>89</sup> The world of Olap’s ocean is endangered, as is Oceania more broadly by such a loss of culture and place, as when Theophil’s footnote 48 to the line “You delve deeply into the fish of mataw anu,” suggests that for the name *mataw anu*, the “meaning is ambiguous, especially since the type of fish is unknown.”<sup>90</sup>

## Notes

1. See, for example, “U.S., China Clash on Key Issues,” *New York Times*, September 5, 2012, and “Too Small an Ocean,” *The Economist*, September 8, 2012. See also *New York Times* editorial, “Asia’s Roiling Sea,” August 18, 2012, <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/08/19/opinion/sunday/asias-roiling-sea.html>.
2. Masao Miyoshi, *Trespasses: Selected Writings* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010). 260–61.
3. See also Rob Wilson, “Worlding Asia/Oceania: Concepts, Tactics, Warning Signs inside the Anthropocene,” essay forthcoming in *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*.
4. Quoted in Stefan Helmreich, *Alien Ocean: Anthropological Voyages in Microbial Seas* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 3, 9.
5. Steve Mentz, *At the Bottom of Shakespeare’s Ocean* (London: Continuum, 2009), xii, 88.
6. Juliana Spahr, *This Connection of Everyone with Lungs* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), title to poetry collection.
7. Juliana Spahr, *Well Then There Now* (Boston: Black Sparrow, 2011), 9–50.
8. Spahr, *Well Then There Now*, 11–15.
9. Spahr, *Well Then There Now*, 84, emphasis in the original.

10. Spahr, *Well Then There Now*, 67.
11. Carl Schmitt, *Land and Sea*, trans. Simona Draghici (Washington DC: Plutarch Press, 1997), 1.
12. We can speculate that the United States' oceanic disposal of Osama bin Laden's remains in the Arabian Sea after his capture and killing in May, 2011, was a way of deterritorializing, othering, and de-nationalizing his very body, subjecting it to elemental oblivion and unhomely erasure by water.
13. See Paul Carter, *Dark Writing: Geography, Performance, Design* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008).
14. On the long duration and geopolitical imaginary of these Euro-American configured oceans, see Christopher Leigh Connery, "Ideologies of Land and Sea: Alfred Thayer Mahan, Carl Schmitt, and the Shaping of Global Myth Elements," *boundary 2* 28 (2001): 173–201; and Christopher Leigh Connery, "There Was No More Sea: The Supersession of the Ocean, from The Bible to Cyberspace," *Journal of Historical Geography* 32 (2006): 495–511.
15. See Christopher Leigh Connery and Rob Wilson, eds., *The Worlding Project: Doing Cultural Studies in the Era of Globalization* (Santa Cruz, CA: New Pacific Press, 2007); Epele Hau'ofa, *We Are the Ocean: Selected Works* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008); and Gary Y. Okihiro, *Island World: A History of Hawai'i and the United States* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008).
16. See Zygmunt Bauman, *Liquid Modernity* (New York: Polity, 2000), 13.
17. On this body of oceanic work, see Sukhdev Sandhu, "Allan Sekula: Filming the Forgotten Resistance at Sea," *The Guardian*, April 20, 2012, accessed online: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/film/2012/apr/20/allan-sekula-resistance-at-sea>.
18. Bruce Cumings, *Dominion from Sea to Sea: Pacific Ascendancy and American Power* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), 386.
19. See Christopher Leigh Connery, "Sea Power," *PMLA* 125 (May, 2010): 685–92.
20. Joshua Clover, "'Atlantic Rim': Chomsky Vs. Zizek," *The Nation*, September 2–9, 2013, accessed September 23, 2012, <http://www.thenation.com/article/175740/atlantic-rim-chomsky-v-zizek#>.
21. *Alien Ocean*, 114–15.
22. *Alien Ocean*, 31.
23. "Once defined by the range of a cannon shot from the shore, sovereignty over coastal waters has since 1982 been guided by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Signatories can claim a 'territorial sea' up to 12 nautical miles (22km) from their shoreline, inside which they can set laws but not meddle with international shipping . . . Beyond the territorial sea there is a 200-mile 'exclusive economic zone' (EEZ), where coastal countries have the sole rights to resources. When two EEZs collide, UNCLOS calls for an equidistant line between the coasts, splitting the shared gulf or strait down the middle. The theory sounds simple, but the practice is complicated: islands, rocks, historic sovereignty and natural resources can bend the line." For an analysis of these current and ongoing conflicts in the Northern Pacific, see *The Economist*, August 25, 2012, "Make Law Not War: How to Solve Spats over Sea Borders."
24. See Robert D. Kaplan, "Geography Strikes Back," *The Wall Street Journal* online, September 7, 2012, [http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10000872396390443819404577635332556005436.html?mod=googlenews\\_wsj](http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10000872396390443819404577635332556005436.html?mod=googlenews_wsj).



25. See Elizabeth DeLoughrey, “Heavy Waters: Waste and Atlantic Modernity,” *PMLA* 125 (May, 2010): 703–12.
26. See Lindsay Hoshaw, “Remnants of Japan’s Tsunami Attract an Archaeological Interest,” *New York Times* online, September 3, 2012, [http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/04/science/remnants-of-japans-tsunami-attract-archaeological-interest.html?\\_r=3&nl=todaysheadlines&emc=edit\\_th\\_20120904](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/04/science/remnants-of-japans-tsunami-attract-archaeological-interest.html?_r=3&nl=todaysheadlines&emc=edit_th_20120904).
27. Helmreich, *Alien Ocean*, 115.
28. Helmreich, *Alien Ocean*, 107.
29. Helmreich, *Alien Ocean*, 109.
30. Helmreich, *Alien Ocean*, 368.
31. This region-based analysis draws on information from the following sources accessed online: Jane Palmer, “Junk Accumulating on Monterey Bay Ocean Floors: Scientists Find Increasing Levels of Debris in the Deep Sea,” *Santa Cruz Sentinel* (February 2, 2010); and Maggie Shiels, “Boat Made of Trash [the Plastiki] Prepares to Set Sail,” *BBC News* (March 3, 2010).
32. Rob Wilson, *Be Always Converting, Be Always Converted: An American Poetics* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), Chapter 4, “Writing Down the Lava Road from Damascus to Kona: Counter-Conversion, Pacific Polytheism, and Re-Nativization in Epele Hau’ofa’s Oceania,” 119–42.
33. See Sean Brawley and Chris Dixon, *The South Seas: A Reception History from Daniel Defoe to Dorothy Lamour* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2015).
34. See Rob Wilson, *Be Always Converting, Be Always Converted*, 126. For a Native Hawaiian vision of ocean-based knowledge and ecological belonging to Oceania, see Karin Amimoto Ingersoll, *Waves of Knowing: A Seascape Epistemology* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016).
35. Meditating on the semiotics and politics of “Oceania,” Hau’ofa admits having the Papua New Guinea pidgin-based term “Wansolwara” in mind, as the name for a newspaper produced by Pacific Islander journalism students at the University of South Pacific in Fiji, when he founded the Oceania Centre for Arts and Culture in 1997 where the “Red Wave Collective” emerges. See “The Ocean in Us” in *We Are the Ocean*, 114–17.
36. *Oceania* remains one of the ecumenical categories of the Roman Catholic Church globe today; an earlier example of this usage would be the study written by the Vicar Apostolic of Western Oceania and founder of the Catholic Church in Aotearoa in 1838, Jean Baptiste Francois Pompallier’s *Early History of the Catholic Church in Oceania* (Auckland, NZ: H. Brett, 1888). There is a stained glass window of Bishop Pompallier in the church at Lapaha, Tonga, Epele’s familial homeland, where he is called “1st Bishop of Central Oceania”: in other words, Hau’ofa would have known such French and Roman Catholic usages (Pompallier wrote his own study in English).
37. From Saint Augustine to Ralph Waldo Emerson (see his Oversoul-centered essay “Circles”) and Marshall McLuhan (as in his talk to Father Peyton), God was commonly defined as “a circle whose center is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere.” *Oceania*, as materialized and envisioned in Hau’ofa, functions as a “God-term” (as Kenneth Burke would call the terminological aims of such rhetoric) of inclusive capaciousness.
38. Gary Snyder, *Earth House Hold: Technical Notes & Queries to Fellow Dharma Revolutionaries* (New York: New Directions, 1969), 127.

39. Arif Dirlik, "Asia Pacific Studies in an Age of Global Modernity," *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* 6 (2005): 158–70.
40. See Rob Wilson and Arif Dirlik, eds., *Asia/Pacific as Space of Cultural Production* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995). On related modes of regional transformation and cultural studies across the Pacific region, see Laura Lyons, "American Pacific Culture and Theory," *The Years' Work in Critical and Cultural Theory* 6 (1996): 315–24; and Houston Wood, "Cultural Studies for Oceania," *The Contemporary Pacific* 15 (2003): 340–74.
41. *Asia/Pacific as Space of Cultural Production*, 6, 13.
42. In "Taiwan as Club 51: The Culture of US Imperialism," *The Worlding Project*, ed. Connery and Wilson, 111.
43. What Dirlik calls "the Asianization of Asian studies" as "directed against the hegemony of Eurocentric knowledge [of the area], especially United States domination of scholarship" and the turn to "insiders' views of Asian problems" and theories (164) might well be elaborated (in the interior Pacific context) as the "Pacific indigenization of Pacific studies," which would complicate and overlap with what he separates as "trend" three, "indigenous studies" wherein he draws upon the work of Vilsoni Hereniko et al. (162–63). This stance would often be directed against Australian and British claims to priority in the Pacific.
44. Dirlik, "Asia Pacific Studies in an Age of Global Modernity," 167.
45. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *Other Asias* (London: Blackwell, 2008), 9, 1.
46. Spivak, *Other Asias*, 8.
47. On this 'Pacific becoming Oceania' as an emergent mode of poetics and politics, see Rob Wilson "Postcolonial Pacific Poetries: Becoming Oceania," in *The Cambridge Companion to Postcolonial Poetry*, ed. Jahan Ramazani (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 58–71.
48. See the Maori-ocean reclaiming long poem by Robert Sullivan, *Star Waka* (Auckland, NZ: Auckland University Press, 1999).
49. With his fourth collection in the *from unincorporated territory* serial poem series, [lukao] (Oakland, CA: Omnidawn, 2017), Craig Santoz Perez continues to draw a counter-imperial cartography of the Marinas Islands and to decolonize and demilitarize the shape and contours of the Pacific as collective space.
50. See Jean Luc Nancy, *The Creation of the World, or Globalization*, trans. Francois Raffoul and David Pettigrew (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2007). If globalization discourse presumes that the "world space" is at the mercy of market norms promulgated by neoliberal policies reshaping the world from Beijing to Paris, this can lead to what Nancy calls the earth-shattering values of the *immonde* (117) or "glomus" (37) delivered to the planet by the world-becoming-market.
51. "Worlding" as a critical practice my poetics is affiliated to via this region-making of "Oceania" enacts an opening of space, time, and consciousness to other values and modes of being. Spatially, a worlded criticism seeks to disclose altered connections and articulations that cut across place, area, city, and given regional forms: "Worlding implies a fully culture-drenched and being-haunted process of 'de-distancing' the ever-globalizing world of techno-domination and its badly managed nuclearized standing-reserve. 'Worlding,' as an active-force gerund, would turn nouns (world) to verbs (worlding), thus shifting the taken-for-granted life-forms of the market and war into the

to-be-generated and remade. As such a *gerundive* process of situated-articulation and world-making, ‘worlding’ thus would help deepen and show how modes and texts of contemporary being and uncanny worldly dwelling (as in reading the language of first-world novels against the imperial grain, for that matter) can become a historical process of taking care, and setting limits, entering into, and making the world-horizon come near and become local and informed, situated, instantiated as an uneven/incomplete material process of *world-becoming*.” See Rob Wilson, “Worlding as Future Tactic, in *The Worlding Project: Doing Cultural Studies in the Era of Globalization*, 211–12.

52. Epeli Hau’ofa, *Tales of the Tikongs* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1994).
53. Epeli Hau’ofa, *Kisses in the Nederends* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1995).
54. Vilsoni Hereniko, ally in Pacific literary and cultural studies, former director of the Center for Pacific Island Studies at the University of Hawai’i and Hau’ofa’s successor as director of the Oceania Centre for Arts, Culture and Pacific Studies at the University of the South Pacific in Suva, offered interesting feedback to me on the whole issue as to how, and to that extent Hau’ofa “excluded” Asians from Oceania or the material national history of the Pacific. After my keynote talk at the 21st School of Pacific and Asian Studies Graduate Student Conference at the University of Hawai’i in 2010, Vili pointed out to me and the audience, through historical anecdote and critical reflection, that Epeli (as Vili said) did “more than anyone” to support the Indians in Fiji, those scapegoated Indo-Fijian settlers at a time when other Pacific writers were more on the side of keeping Fiji for Fijians and supporting the nativist based hegemony and regime changes there.
55. This is from the CD performance Teresia Teaiwa [with Sia Figiel], *Tereneisa* (Honolulu: Eleipao Press, 2000).
56. John Pule, *The Shark that Ate the Sun* (Auckland, NZ: Penguin, 1992), 75.
57. Lawson Fusao Inada, “Shrinking the Pacific,” *boundary 2* 21.1 (1994): 57–58.
58. Joe Balaz, “Polynesian Hong Kong,” in *Otoliths: A Magazine of Many E-Things* 16 (2010), <http://the-otolith.blogspot.hk/2010/01/joe-balaz-polynesian-hong-kong-its.html>.
59. See Fredric Jameson, “New Literary History after the End of the New,” *New Literary History* 39 (2008). Jameson presumes global-capitalist formulations of ethnic simulation: “In globalization, there are no cultures, but only nostalgic images of national cultures: in postmodernity we cannot appeal back to the fetish of national culture and cultural authenticity. Our object of study is rather Disneyfication, the production of simulacra of national cultures; and tourism, the industry that organizes the consumption of those simulacra and those spectacles or images” (379).
60. Hsinya Huang, “Representing Indigenous Bodies in Epeli Hau’ofa and Syaman Rapongan,” *Tamkang Review* 40, no. 2 (June 2010): 5.
61. Huang, “Representing Indigenous Bodies in Epeli Hau’ofa and Syaman Rapongan,” 8.
62. For more on this multi-sited “trans-indigenous” work, see Hsinya Huang et al., “Special Forum: Charting Transnational Native American Studies,” *Journal of Transnational American Studies* 4, no. 1 (2012): 1–15.
63. Albert Saijo, *OUTSPEAKS* (Honolulu, HI: Bamboo Ridge Press, 1997), 163.
64. Saijo, *OUTSPEAKS*, 139–45.
65. Saijo, *OUTSPEAKS*, 197.
66. Saijo, *OUTSPEAKS*, 199. In *Jan Ken Po: Live in Honolulu* (Honolulu: ‘Eleipao Press 2000) and Hawai’i Dub Machine put together a CD recording the 2000 poetry reading of these three “transpacific dharma wanderers,” Gary Snyder, Albert Saijo, and Nanao

- Sakaki, whose work from the 1950s to the present has forged an alternative vision of Asia and the Pacific as tied to modes of planetary belonging, linking the Buddha and animal with the human. Saijo's poems like "O Muse" deftly invoke and honor this "RADIONCARBONIC" and "BIOLUMINESCENT" oneness of body (bios) with the radio-waves, carbonic presence, and light of world (*OUTSPEAKS*, 13).
67. Craig Santos Perez, *from Unincorporated Territory [hacha]* (Honolulu: Tinfish Press, 2008), 11.
  68. Perez, *from Unincorporated Territory [hacha]*, 10. Further references will occur parenthetically.
  69. Craig Santos Perez, *from Unincorporated Territory [saina]* (Richmond, CA: Omnidawn, 2010), 44–46.
  70. See also Epli Hau'ofa, "Pasts to Remember," *We Are the Ocean: Selected Works* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008), 63
  71. Perez, *from Unincorporated Territory [saina]*, 47. Further references to [saina] will occur parenthetically in this paragraph.
  72. See also Hsuan L. Hsu, "Gua'han (Guam), Literary Emergence, and the American Pacific in *Homebase* and *from unincorporated territory*," *American Literary History* 24 (2012): 281–307; and Otto Heim, "Locating Guam: The Cartography of the Pacific and Craig Santos Perez's Remapping of Unincorporated Territory," in *New Directions in Travel Writing Studies*, ed. Julia Kuehn and Paul Smethurst (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 180–91.
  73. Gary Snyder, *A Place in Space: Ethics, Aesthetics, and Watersheds* (Berkeley: Counterpoint, 1995), 233.
  74. Gary Snyder, *A Place in Space*, 255.
  75. Gary Snyder, *A Place in Space*, 234.
  76. Gary Snyder, *The Old Ways: Six Essays* (San Francisco: City Lights Press, 1977), 3–9.
  77. Gary Snyder, "North Beach," *The Old Ways*, 5.
  78. Snyder, *Earth House Hold*, 135–43.
  79. Nanao Sakaki, *Break the Mirror* (Berkeley: North Point, 1987), 140–42.
  80. Iain Sinclair, "Gary Snyder: The Man in the Clearing," *London Review of Books* 34, no. 10 (May 2012), accessed online: <http://www.lrb.co.uk/v34/n10/iain-sinclair/the-man-in-the-clearing>.
  81. Rob Wilson, *Be Always Converting, Be Always Converted*, 15.
  82. Lawrence Buell, *Writing for an Endangered World: Literature, Culture, and Environment in the U.S. and Beyond* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2003), 22.
  83. James Clifford, "Indigenous Articulations," in *The Worlding Project: Doing Cultural Studies in the Era of Globalization*, 22–23.
  84. Clifford, "Indigenous Articulations," 31.
  85. See Albert Wendt, Reina Waitiri, and Robert Sullivan, eds., *Whetu Moana: Contemporary Polynesian Poems in English* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2003).
  86. Rob Wilson, *Be Always Converting Be Always Converted*, 139.
  87. Cited in Hau'ofa, *We Are the Ocean*, 52.
  88. In *Asia/Pacific as Space of Cultural Production*, 345–49. See also Joachim Peter, "Chuukese Travellers and the Idea of Horizon," *Asia Pacific Viewpoints* 41 (2002): 253–67.
  89. Chuukese is an Austronesian language of the Malayo-Polynesian family branch dispersed across the Pacific islands, Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines, and thus far

more dispersive than the related yet Taiwan-concentrated branch of the Austronesian language known as the Formosan languages that are used by pre-Han peoples of Taiwan.

90. *Asia/Pacific as Space of Cultural Production*, 349.