American Studies as Transnational Practice

Yuan Shu, Donald E. Pease

Published by Dartmouth College Press


_for additional information about this book_
https://muse.jhu.edu/book/43328

_for content related to this chapter_
https://muse.jhu.edu/related_content?type=book&id=1692298
Counter-Conversions toward Oceania

This essay aims to invoke the emerging Pacific regional category and the global and local vision of an ocean commons called Oceania to open the American Pacific region—and American Studies—up to stronger modes of translocal solidarity, ecological alliance, and world belonging. At the core will be the projection of an environmental ecopoetics, here articulated via thinking with and beyond the Pacific and Asia imaginary of Epeli Hau’ofa’s works in social theory and literature, as a means of overcoming nation-centric or more absolutely racialized and bordered frameworks of Asian and Pacific identity. This ecopoetics would reframe sites like California, Hawaiʻi, Taiwan, Fiji, and Okinawa and construct an affiliated poetics of transregional worlding, bioregion, and translocal solidarity that has been long enacted in “transpacific dharma wanderers” and writers like Albert Saijo, Gary Snyder, Nanao Sakaki, Robert Sullivan, Susan Schultz, and Craig Santos Perez.¹

This push toward an ecopoetics of Oceania will begin by invoking three local images of the Pacific Ocean—“local” referring to Monterey Bay in central coastal California, where I have lived and worked since moving from Hawaiʻi in 2001. When I use the term “local,” it should have the multiscalar resonance of place-based specificity, agonistic struggle for social justice and native recognition, and the globally entangled dialectics of world systems in which I was immersed in Hawaiʻi and that I tried to theorize and enact in Reimagining the American Pacific and later essays.²

The first image is that of the human-dwarfing sequoias in the mountains and hills of Santa Cruz, which have survived for centuries partly on fogs that come from as far as China and as near as Hawaiʻi—trees that shifting thermal patterns now threaten with drying needles and diminishing size. The second is of the ocean floor at Monterey Bay, which is becoming a one-ton layer of military-
industrial and other human discards (like artillery shells, fishing lines, bottles, and plastic items) despite the vigilant efforts of many environmental forces and agencies. The third, and more apocalyptic, image, which many people are familiar with by now, forms a kind of collective work of global-capitalist postmodern art (so to speak): our global-waste installation in the transpacific ocean commons created by a hyperconsumerist ethos and ecological unconsciousness. The allusion here is to the Great Pacific Garbage Patch: a gyre of detritus twice the size of Texas and weighing some hundred million tons that lies just below the ocean’s surface between California, Hawai’i, and Japan (the Northern Pacific Gyre) and is formed of plastic bottles, chemical sludge, non-biodegradable waste, and polymers harmful to marine wildlife.\(^3\)

I invoke these three ecopoetic images, but there are many others: Tuvalu Island disappearing due to global warming and rising tides, the military buildup and resulting ongoing damage from Guam and Okinawa to the Persian Gulf, the melting Arctic, the increasingly numerous typhoons of Taiwan and the Philippines. It is as if they are in some bleakly post-Whitmanic transnational catalogue aimed at converting you (as it were) to a vision of Oceania as a site of transpacific solidarity. This stance toward Oceania presumes a translocal regional formation of water-crossing linkages and multiscalar reimagining built up from field-imaginary works in literature and social science by the social scientist and fabulist Epeli Hau’ofa (1939–2009), to whom so many of us across the Pacific region remain indebted.\(^4\) But I would move Hau’ofa’s islander-centric regional frame toward evoking a more capacious vision of alternative transnational belonging, ecological confederation, and transracial solidarity: Oceania as a performative speech act enacts what Arjun Appadurai has called “imagination as social practice,” a public form of intellectual labor and cultural practice that Hau’ofa was spectacular at doing in his own original, humorous, and visionary way.\(^5\)

When I gesture toward that loaded verb “convert,” this might well give the reader postcolonial pause, hearing in this performative verb quasi-imperialist echoes of some latter-day orientalist, that liberal scholar whom Edward Said memorably described in 1978 (as if echoing in ironic reversal the Puritan tonalities of Thomas Shepard across the “praying Indian” wilderness of colonial Massachusetts in the 1640s\(^6\)): “Yet the Orientalist makes it his work to be always converting the Orient from something into something else: he does this for himself, for the sake of his culture, in some cases for what he believes is the sake of the Oriental.”\(^7\) Said’s caustic elegance might be enough to scare off Saint Paul, the pluralist Pierre Hadot, or even the Jeremiac Bob Dylan, from any such other-oriented benevolence.\(^8\) When I gave a talk on my study Be Always Converting, Be Always Converted in 2010 at the Academia Sinica in Taipei, a young Taiwanese scholar of literary and
psychoanalytical persuasion remarked, rightly to my mind, “your title must
mean ‘be always perverting’ because . . . the meanings and forms of con-
version change in these Pacific and Asia contact zones [like New Caledonia,
Tonga, Hawai‘i, and Taiwan].”

The strongest postcolonial portrait of conversion, in my study of literary
and theopoetic dynamics across the decolonizing Pacific, was drawn from
Epeli Hau’ofa, for whom Christian conversion had become reborn, or trans-
culturally mutated as cultural form or frame, via his place-based and ocean-
affiliated metamorphosis of postcontact indigenous belief into what I called
“counter-conversion” to Polynesian polytheism. This results for Hau’ofa in a
large-scale “regoding” of the Native Pacific Ocean into the presencing of Pele
and Maui as cultural, political, and environmental forces: in effect, Hau’ofa
was enacting a turn away (or deconversion) from the conversion telos of cap-
italist hyperdevelopmentalism and its turbocharged work ethic of production
and consumption that has gotten the ocean into the trouble it is now in,
with its Great Pacific Garbage Patch ecoscape. I described this process of
counter-converting in Be Always Converting, Be Always Converted:

Oceania as such invokes this New Pacific ecumene, for Hau’ofa, a strategic
mode of refiguring this Pauline universality of address for Pacific Islanders
for whom globalization discourse would hail them into market dependency,
subaltern labor, and secular difference. Oceania, vast, watery, evocative, at
core mysterious (like the earlier PNG pidgin-vernacular term “wansolwara”
for the Pacific as “one salt water” which can be translated into “one ocean,
one people”) becomes a strategic way of reframing and forming a critical re-
gegional identity. “South Seas,” “Australasia,” “South Pacific” (introduced via
James Michener, Rodgers and Hammerstein et al. during the postwar Ameri-
can hegemony in the cold war ethnoscapes of “militourism”), “Pacific Basin”
and “Pacific Islands” all give way to Oceania as the self-identified signifier of
Pacific choice. But, in this turn, counter-conversion is generated from the
volcanic earth and sea on the Big Island in Hau’ofa’s “Our Sea of Islands.”

Hau’ofa framed his rebirth turn (in 1993) toward Oceania—it was origi-
nally a French geographical term—l’Océanie—coined in 1831 by the French
explorer Dumont d’Urville, but it has become the name for one of eight ecoz-
one on the planet—along a road leading from Damascus and Suva to Kona
and Volcano on the Big Island. He went on writing and theorizing for nearly two decades, until his death in Fiji in 2009, about this hope-generating ecumenical turn back to native gods, goddesses, and art and away from what he saw as neodependency and globalization models of smallness, lack, or belatedness across the Pacific Islands.

Ecumene is a frame drawn from, and troped on here, the Greco-Roman world, where it meant the inhabited part of the earth. World geographers now use it to stand for populated sites. Similarly, “ecumenical” has been used by religious forces since 1545, the time of the Roman Catholic dispensation, to stand for a way of promoting unity and cooperation across divisions of faith: ut unum sint, as Norman Brown recapitulated this drive to unity beyond fractured differences in Pope John XXIII (as well as Marx and Freud). But to be sure, Hau’ofa gives his “ecumene” a more water-based and oceanic way of belonging to the world: underspecified as to borders and mores, the term “Oceania” becomes a regional framework whose center we could say (echoing Emerson and Pascal on God) is everywhere in the interior Pacific and whose circumference is not fixed or certain, from its early use (which included Australia and New Zealand at the core) to Hau’ofa’s later iterations (which can exclude all of Asia, as I will discuss below).

Tellingly, Oceania remains one of the ecumenical categories of the Roman Catholic Church’s global vision still used today. An early example of this would be the 1888 study written by the vicar apostolic of Western Oceania and the founder of the Catholic Church in Aotearoa in 1838, Jean Baptiste François Pompallier’s Early History of the Catholic Church in Oceania. There is a stained glass window of Bishop Pompallier in the church at Lapaha, Tonga, Hau’ofa’s familial homeland, where Pompallier is called the first 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 and (in my view), Hau’ofa was troping on and mutating this prior theopoetic framework of Catholic Oceania.

“Ecumene,” too, as we can learn from Gary Snyder’s presciently ecopoetic usage, is related to the term “ecology,” the very “earth household” (as Snyder tropes on its etymology in the essays and poetry collected in Earth House Hold) of water and land, economy and planet, that we have been reaching toward as a mode of more planetary belonging. As Snyder writes in “Notes on Poetry as an Ecological Survival Tool,” in 1969 (just before ecology emerged as a global science in the 1970s), “Ecology: ‘eco’ (oikos) meaning ‘house’ (cf. ‘ecumenical’): Housekeeping on Earth. Economics, which is merely the housekeeping of various social orders—taking out more than it puts back—must learn the rules of the greater [planetary] realm.” Hau’ofa’s Oceania serves as his postcolonial catholic (with a small
c) and boundary-shattering ecumene of Pacific Ocean belonging. Oceania, as materialized and envisioned in Hau’ofa’s work, functions as “God-term” (as Kenneth Burke called the terminological end-term of such rhetorical persuasion), a grandly inclusive synecdoche of part-whole belonging that is all but visionary in its boundary-crossing capaciousness.\(^\text{17}\)

Hau’ofa shows—in terms of myriad social-scientific and literary works as constructions of this interior Oceania in his *We Are the Ocean: Selected Works*—that a process of “world enlarging” occurs across diverse sites of pre- and postmodernity in five ways:\(^\text{18}\)

1. Via processes of material and semiotic exchange based on an ethos of reciprocity
2. Via seafaring and jet travel interconnecting sites
3. Via myths and visions of gods, peoples, and sites
4. Via diasporic expansion and interconnection to great cities like Auckland, Honolulu, or those of the Bay Area in California
5. Via this vision of Oceania as a counter-converting trope turning the Pacific away from the *telos* of global domination and the ethos of disruptive developmentalism

More to the point, Hau’ofa’s Oceania serves as an environmental framework of self-world interfusion and projects a regional configuration at once ancestral and postmodern or global, in which spaces of premodern and modern connection by sea voyage and jet travel are relinked across modern colonial maps that render island peoples as small, disconnected, and depleted, just the inhabitants of some “invisible vast wilderness of islands” flyspecked on a tourist map, as Mark Twain put it in *Following the Equator*.\(^\text{19}\) Stories, images, art, dance, and legends perform a deep sense of Pacific sublimity; long-standing and tightly woven networks of interconnected reciprocity prove crucial to this formation, as islands and oceans are interconnected, move, link, flow across borders, and thus counter the late capitalist world from before, within, and after it. Hau’ofa, honored in life and death as the so-called Chief of Oceania, has—in the view of the Papua New Guinea poet Steven Edmund Winduo—opened a “school of thought,” made a new beginning for Pacific cultural producers, and vibrantly reframed Oceania as a “spirit of relatedness” that we can (as I am doing here) build on in other disciplines and related sites.\(^\text{20}\)

*Transformations in Asian Pacific Knowledge Formations*

Across emerging worlds and altered spatialities and knowledge formations, boundaries and study objects of areas and disciplines are being remade into frameworks like that of Hau’ofa and those gathered in this collection on
transnational American studies. Regions and parts are being situated into different wholes and linked to differing social and ecological energies. Pedagogies push toward articulating counterworlds, and the forms of new spatiality that have emerged in literary, social-scientific, and cultural studies. Perhaps reflecting modes of technological interconnectivity and global mobility, from above and below, regions are becoming theorized as more open to fluid forms of relationality and interconnection—in frameworks like Oceania, Inter-Asia, Asia/Pacific, the so-called new Europe, and the circum-Mediterranean—than previous area studies had allowed.

In a 2005 essay titled “Asia Pacific Studies in an Age of Global Modernity”—published in Inter-Asia Cultural Studies, a journal in which this interdisciplinary work in field reshaping and multisited transformation of the Asia Pacific region has taken place since its first issue in 1999—Arif Dirlik, the postcolonial Marxist historian, provides an insightful overview of ongoing transformations of the Asia-Pacific field imaginaries as tied to areas and regions since the late 1980s. Dirlik and I were coeditors of a special issue of boundary 2 called “Asia/Pacific as Space of Cultural Production,” (including at its core Hau’ofa’s frame-shattering “Our Sea of Islands”), wherein we aggravated discrepancies between these two Cold War areas, at the same time placing Asia and the Pacific in contentious, rhizomatic, interlinked, and ongoing transdisciplinary and transspatial dialogue.

As the introduction to Asia/Pacific as Space of Cultural Production—a book based on the articles in the special issue of boundary 2—declared, “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.” The term “Asia-Pacific,” more frequently referred to as APEC, weights the Pacific toward Asia as a site that controls motions in labor, capital, and culture as we surveyed in the book. But Asia/Pacific can also mean opening up the Pacific to alternative formations, “as [the] 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.”

In the 2005 essay, Dirlik reflects on such disciplinary transformations and points to what he calls five overlapping “trends” that have arisen across global academia, following on the crisis in area studies and the dismantling of Cold War rationales, or what Kuan-Hsing Chen calls the ongoing process of “de-Cold-Warization” across Asia and the Pacific. Dirlik identifies these five trends as civilizational studies, the Asianization of Asian studies, indigenous studies, oceanic studies, and diasporic studies. While he sees the first three as still largely “continuous with [area studies and nation-based formations] in terms of fundamental spatial assumptions” of borders and fields
via nations, he goes on to discuss oceanic and diasporic studies as representing “novel spatialities” that have arisen to challenge—and assert alternatives to—area- or nation-based models that had solidified during and after World War II (161). 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,” as measured against the opposing turn to “insiders’ views of Asian problems” and theories (164), however, might well be framed (in interior Pacific contexts) the “Pacific indigenization of Pacific studies.” This would overlap with and complicate what he separates into the third trend, “indigenous studies” (wherein he draws on the work of Vilsoni Hereniko and others [162–63]), as this turn would often be directed against Australian or European claims to priority of perspective and would fit into “oceanic studies” as well.

“Oceanic studies,” while related to Pacific Rim studies of transpacific capitalism in Asia-Pacific and other world ocean sites, can serve discrepant global, national, and local interests. As Dirlik phrases this contemporary dialectic, “Oceans may represent projections of place-based indigenous ideals into space, as they do for Epeli Hau’ofa, or they may be used in service of an APEC version of space in the service of capital and [transnationalizing] states” (167). Gazing across the Pacific to Japanese Zen and Chinese poetry as well as to communist movements in Russia and China, Kenneth Rexroth had noted this uneven possibility of linkage and difference in a 1971 interview on San Francisco as long connected to Asia Pacific by the transpacific ocean: “Oceans, like steppes, unite as well as separate. The West Coast is close to the Orient. It’s the next thing out there. . . . SF is an international city and it has living contact with the Orient.”

Dirlik’s five trends—what we might call, following Foucault, power/knowledge shifts in disciplinary paradigms—summarized as “civilizational revivals, the new attention to oceans, controversies over inside/outside forms of knowledge, diasporic motions and indigenous movements” (167) all point to transformations in the making of Asia Pacific and the Pacific region as such and need to be implemented with critical caution, lest we return (say) to the “The Glorious Pacific Way” of the neocolonizing “Forge Foundation,” as Hau’ofa warned through the faux indigenizing character of Ole Pacifikiwei in his short story, who sells out oral histories of the area, as he becomes a “first-rate, expert beggar.”

Asia Sublates the Pacific

Unmaking and deworlding colonial modes with raucous satire, Hau’ofa’s own poetic and fictional works are written in the post-British “many Englishes” of
Polynesia—sometimes called by Juliana Spahr and others “alter Englishes”—
which are often creolized and pidginized in form. So pidgin artists (like Joe
Balaz, Wayne Westlake, and others) can and do figure in the remaking of
this reworlded Oceania, resisting the reign of what Hau’ofa’s mocked as
World Bank English. Yet Hau’ofa’s works often demonize or mock con-
temporary Asians, or exclude them from having any affirmative claim on, or
role in, the construction of this alternative Oceania of ecological belonging
and cultural and political resistance. In his satirical Pacific novella, Tales of
the Tikongs, Japanese corporate forces are linked to Pacific Rim operators
from Australia and New Zealand (“The Pacific Way belongs to regional
Elites . . .” [46]), building cars that are too small for hefty Tikong people
(12) and a tuna cannery that ends in disarray (19–21); and the gaming par-
lors of Taipei and sex shops of Tokyo and Sydney conspire to turn Tiko
into “the South Pacific Haven for Gambling and Prostitution” (81). Pacific
developers like Ole turn to “regional [money] laundry centers” in Bangkok,
Kuala Lumpur, Manila, Suva, and Moumea to learn how to do this sub-
limited mode of Asia-Pacific exploitation (92). In a related carnivalesque
vision of Asians in the Pacific, Kisses in the Nederends centers on New Age
modes of duping, tranquilizing, and conning the indigenous Pacific body of
Oilei Bomboki via that sage, yogi, and con man of Asian capitalist yoga and
libidinal love, Babu Vivekanand.
This subaltern interior Pacific is staged in contrast with the more instru-
mentalizing and expansionist Asia as figured forth in Hau’ofa’s fictional
works as just described—as well as in his Pacific-based turn against Asia in
his essay “The Ocean in Us”—as not part of this newly emerging Oceania,
suggesting instead the cognitive mapping of us and Asian commercial forces
aligned in hegemony over the interior Pacific. In this imaginary of Asia-
Pacific, Asia sublates the Pacific into neo-imperialist dynamics, with the sea
becoming capital’s element of expansion across East and West: the Pacific is
a transnational space of sea power and ocean commerce, just “liquid capi-
tal” coming and going from Asia, as Christopher Connery summarized this
telos of Pacific Rim forces.
At several points in “The Ocean in Us”—an essay based on the Oceania
lecture delivered at the University of the South Pacific in Suva in 1997 that
was published in Dreadlocks in Oceania and served as the ecological man-
ifesto in We Are the Ocean—Hau’ofa moves toward forms of ecological
solidarity. “And for a new Oceania to take hold,” he writes, “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” (56). Earlier in the same essay, discussing who
belongs to this new Oceania, Hau’ofa observes that “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” (50–51). Belonging to Oceania, in this formulation, is a matter of ethical, political, and cultural commitment. Being Oceanian involves not only having a sense of history and cultivating a set of attitudes and beliefs, it also involves a sense of belonging to the earth and ocean as a biological and regional 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 in 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 are excluded by history, tradition, and territorial site from belonging to this new Oceania. Questions haunt such sites in the Pacific and Asia: can Asia ever become (a past or present) part of Oceania, can Oceania become the basis of a broader environmental collation, and how can Oceania alter the hegemonic “Pacific Rim” or “Asia Pacific” frameworks?37

This view of Asia as sublating the interior or subaltern Pacific or being excluded from belonging to Oceania as a political ecoscape is understandable in historical terms and not uncommon in a range of works and genres. Teresia Teaiwa, in her song “Amnesia” from Tereneisa, performed with the Samoan novelist 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.”38 In The Shark That Ate the Sun, John Pule sees this American navy’s Asian base–linked Pacific turn into an “American Lake,” as linking “ships in Samoa / Hawai’i, Taiwan, the Philippines, / Belau, Kwajelein, Truk / The Marianas, the Carolines” and as forming a security chain across Oceania in which “the dead [as at the Bikini Atoll] are louder in protest than the living.”39

Technological reformations of Asian and Pacific spaces and bodies are dystopically figured in Karen Tei Yamashita’s “A Cyber Asian Odyssey”—a theatrical performance piece of technological orientalism in her Anime Wong: Fictions of Performance—and transpacific Maoist links are forged between China and Asian American struggles for Bay Area multicultural decolonization in her novel of transpacific and trans-Americas revolutionary heritage, I-Hotel.40 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—it is hard to tell
the difference in this unified Asia-Pacific. Joe Balaz, in a poem published in the online journal *Otoliths*, depicts the Hawaiian watershed at Waikiki as having become a shopping-mall carnival of fake cultures and clownish versions of indigeneity, commodified into what he calls (in the title) 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.

This presumes a global capitalist framework spun around the making of Asia-Pacific that I had circulated in cultural studies venues and poems, with Asians on the Pacific Rim portrayed as not really part of the forging of alternative frameworks (like Oceania) or claims (like those of indigeneity). Instead, this Pacific Rim Asia was aligned with the transnational cultural class, with its tactics of domination and simulation: a kind of “Disneyfication” writ large for global tourist consumption (as Fredric Jameson allegorizes this postmodern “ethnicity-effect”). In essays such as “Imagining Asia-Pacific” and the chapter on Hau’ofa’s carnivalesque Asia-Pacific in *Be Always Converting, Be Always Converted*, I resorted to antagonistic formulations such as: “Asia/Pacific and inter-Asia do not just belong to the ‘imagined community’ of transnational capital and the astronaut class of [Asian] frequent flyers; they cannot just sublate Pacific into Asia.” But much more is taking place in and hold on the Asian and Pacific dynamics of cultural production and site-based work across decolonizing Oceania.

In postcolonial Taiwan, to invoke a strong counterexample in the northern Pacific, a school of cultural studies work is arising that links Taiwan native studies to Native American transnational frameworks of extranational and transindigenous belonging on the one hand, and on the other hand that forges a primordial and 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 as refracted through the works of Shyman Raporgan, a Tau poet from Orchid Island (long part of Austronesian culture and site of antinuclear protests in the 1980s), Hsinya Huang writes: “Through their own lived experience, as well as that of their island kin, Hau’ofa and Raporgan 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.” Huang notes that Raporgan, like Hau’ofa, “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.’” Huang invokes Raporgan’s reading of Oceania in the northeastern Pacific as an archipelagic region re-shaping Taiwan as transindigenous nation-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.”

In *Earth House Hold*, Snyder ends his poetic and didactic journey out of Cold War us formations and into alternative worlding constructions of place, self, and community in Asia and the Pacific (linking sites in Japan, India, Tonga, “Cold Mountain” China, and the Pacific Northwest) by building up the Banyan Ashram on Suwa-No-Se Island in the Amami groups of islands that continue from Okinawa and the Ryukyus to Taiwan. This ashram, led by the amazing poet and transpacific dharma Buddhist wanderer Nanao Sakaki of works like *Break the Mirror*, 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 oceanic bonding for nourishment: “For some fish you must become one with the sea and consider yourself a fish among fish.”

Meditating, farming, fishing, dancing, chanting, getting married to person and place, Snyder, his wife, Masa; and their mentor, Sakaki, push their transpacific journey toward 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.” Snyder brought the ecological and political stance I have been calling ecopoetics back across the Pacific in works of global and local ecological affects like *Turtle Island*, *Regarding Wave*, and *Mountains and Rivers without End* and in a work of ecological and poetic essays, *A Place in Space*.

Albert Saijo’s wondrously post-Beat, pidginized, “vandalized,” Zen-and-Emerson-haunted ecological rhapsody, *OUTSPAKES* forges what he calls an alternative “cosmovision” of place, ocean, and planet from his home on the edge of the Pacific near Hapu’u Forest in Volcano on the Big Island. 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” (139–45). Identifying himself not as an ethnic or abjected Asian settler but as a “REBORN HUMAN” (197) of world ecology—the whole book is written in the declamatory capital letters of the manifesto (“I WANT TO OUSPEAK” forces of capitalist domination like a “FIELD PREACHER” [17]) or trans-species rant, as in an “Animal Rhapsode” (18)—Saijo presents his view of the small and caring life in hiking and sustenance living as beautiful. He summarizes his poetics and life 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 this way: “EDGING AN ACTIVE VOLCANO—LIKE THEY SAY IF YER NOT LIVIN ON THE EDGE YER TAKIN UP TOO MUCH SPACE” (199). Saijo’s poems like “O Muse” invoke and honor this “RADIONCARBONIC” and “BIOLUMINESCENT” oneness of body with the radio waves, carbonic presence, and light of world (13). In Jan Ken Po: Live in Honolulu, ‘Elepaio Press and Hawai’i Dub Machine productions (in the Dharma Brothers Studio) put together a CD of the 2000 poetry reading of these “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 tied to ecopoetic modes of planetary belonging, linking the human to other animals and the Buddha.

Three book-length contemporary poems by Craig Santos Perez perform the hugely innovative, serial, and historically informed feat of repossessing Oceania and the Marianas, a mode of world belonging in which Guam (or Guahan) can never be named (or forgotten as) just another unincorporated territory of the post-1898 American Pacific.51 Resisting Guam’s being just another “Pacific hub to Asia” (hacha, 30) and US “jurisdiction” (saina, 101), or its being referred to as “uss Guam” (hacha, 11) in the Pacific, to use a powerful example of Asia and Pacific remapping, Santos Perez also resists the centuries-long Spanish and US “reduction” process of “subduing, converting, and gathering natives through the establishment of missions and the stationing of soldiers to protect those missions” (hacha, 11).

Guam can no longer be taken as just a militarized island with “planes [forever] roaring out from Guam over Asia” and turning the Americanized Pacific into “a sea of toiling men,” “a bloated thing” of war, dispossession, and exploitation (hacha, 10). 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, and others) would proliferate counternamings and trace precarious routes and roots on Guahan, resulting in a whole countergeography 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 the Spanish of native seafaring tools and boats of “tasi” (the ocean or sea) like the flying proas or the sak-
man (long-voyaging canoe) and thus prevented from traveling between islands, “the chamorros themselves were by this time [1780s] no longer a people of the sea” (*hacha*, 74), and in World War II Guam was called an “omiya jima” (great shrine island) by the Japanese (*hacha*, 76). All this process of dispossession leads to the poet using Chamorro as a “drowned language” (*hacha*, 78), returning in fragments and broken phrases and the renaming of plants, history, and other things. At the same time, eight thousand marines will be transferred to Guam from Okinawa by 2014 through a joint effort of the United States and Japan (*hacha*, 91). And an ecological miscreant, the brown tree snake that reached war-torn Guam as a stowaway in World War II cargo ships (*hacha*, 87) has expanded its population exponentially and led to declining numbers of birds and losses of native animals, as illegal dumpsites proliferate as well.

Santos Perez “convenes,” as the poet Aaron Shurin puts it, “an oceanic poetics”: the poems, like its rooted and routed people, must begin again in salt water and subsurface groundings and waterings, tracing one salt water across different parts of the Pacific. “What the map cuts up,” as Michel de Certeau refers to this quest, “the story cuts across” (*saina*, 44), as the poet works in a diaspora of open-field or circumoceanic poetics (Santos Perez has lived in Northern California since his family moved there in 1995) to tell the broken story in shards; remainders; and space-time constellations of place, family, and handed down stories. Oceania is reconvened to put the water-land nexus back into pre- and postcolonial focus, via a resurrected spatiality of four languages.

As the poet writes, acknowledging intertextual borrowings from Charles Olson as well as from Hau’ofa in his oceanic “field composition” poems, “Hau’ofa draws our attention to an oceania, preoceania, and transoceania surrounding islands, below the waves, and in the sky—a deeper geography and mythology” (*saina*, 63). Santos Perez does not just use the term “New Oceania,” he enacts this region in performative worlding. He also quotes from Robert Sullivan’s waka, “Ocean Birth”: “every song to remind us / we are skin of the ocean” (*saina*, 113). And he quotes the fluid documentary poet Muriel Rukeyser, from “The Outer Banks”: “All is open. / Open water. Open I” (*saina*, 113), making fixities break down, fuse, and link across imposed divides of subjected verbs; making “open” into world-making and I-breaking action.

The Asia of these poems by Santos Perez is an exploitative one as well, in which well-off pregnant South Koreans arrive in US territories to give birth to children who thereby become US citizens as promoted by “birth tour agencies” (*saina*, 47). And the postwar tourists begin to pour in from the Pacific 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 (saina, 87). Since 1973 a quarter of a million tourists—70 percent of them Japanese—have been coming to Guam each year. The sections of the poem all have Japanese numbers embedded in them, along with English, Chamorro, and Spanish numbers. The rebranding of Guam as a “world class tourist destination” with hotels “all with ocean views” continues (saina, 115), as a function of what Teresia Teaiwa calls the “militourist” mode of space production of the Pacific for Asian and Euro-American fulfillment. Even as the grandmother’s Catholic rosary ties the Pacific together in grass-roots beatitude and oceanic crossings, “when I say rosary [in Chamorro] I think I can hear her voice / even here in California” (saina, 119). The guma collection continues to extend and enrich the historical, linguistic, and formal range of Santos Perez’s ongoing serial poem, in effect pushing this fatal impact narrative into quasi-epic scope as a portrayal of Guam in all its indigenous, colonial, modern, and contemporary complexity. The contradictory island site is portrayed as at once hybrid, assimilated, and decolonizing. Ethnography, autobiography, history, geography, literary criticism, journalism, ecology, the fascist writings of Ezra Pound, the spectral figure of Juan Malo, dietary regimes of junk food, and poems by other contemporary Chamorro poets all collide with and are woven into this seriocomic intertextual mix of oceanic convening.

No Asian or Pacific region-making framework can remain innocent these days of uneven power dynamics, historical elisions, bordered exclusions, internal discrepancies, or aporias of place making. Postmodern Oceania (full of Sullivan’s Maori wakas and Santos Perez’s Chamorro sakman as well as 350-meter-long diesel-powered ships from Matson and Evergreen to STX, some of which lose 10,100 containers at sea each year) offers no ecological cure or postcolonial kava pill for the Cold War hangovers of war, post-9/11 remilitarization, racial tension, or the dynamics of neoliberal globalization that are reshaping space, time, self, and world.

We cannot forget war, racism, colonialism, and neocolonial economic disparities in the magical waters of the Pacific as Oceania. Still, as I urged in my study of Hau’ofa, affiliation to Oceania can become not just a matter of heritage or blood but can help forge “a trope of commitment, vision, and will” in the remaking of Asia and the Pacific. As Gayatri Spivak reminds us, reading literature from such discrepant spaces and the clashing of cultures, “the old postcolonial model—very much India plus the Sartrian Fanon—will not serve now as the master model for transnational to global cultural studies on the way to planetarity.” For we are dealing with heterogeneity, as she argues of sites like post-Soviet Russia and other Asias
Toward an Ecopoetics of Oceania; new paradigms are emerging on a scale of intervention and responsibility that are more than just the same old global and postcolonial ones.

**Toward an Ecopoetics of Asia-Pacific Solidarity in Oceania**

Across six postwar decades and transpacific contexts, Snyder has forged a coherent and consistent ecopoetics from *Earth House Hold* to *A Place in Space*. As I suggested above, Snyder is a poet activist from the Beat era who has long advocated the regenerative power of wilderness, what he calls “the practice of the wild,” and enacted the deep ties of the Pacific Rim to the powers of emplaced consciousness and reinhabitory energies in the wilderness. In Snyder’s geographical and poetic reframing of the coastal Pacific into what he calls in his 1992 essay “Coming into the Watershed”—which has become crucial to the field of American ecological criticism and was reprinted in *A Place in Space*—“the San Francisco / valley rivers / Shasta headwaters bio-city region” are all interconnected (by slashes here) and lead to modes of gratitude and planetary care for “Turtle Island” as an ethical attitude.59 Snyder renames this biological community from his home in the Kitkitdizze Sierras biological region the “Shasta Nation” (*A Place in Space*, 255), where the regenerative energies of the wild and the sense of primordial planetary belonging can lead Euro-Americans, Asian Americans, African Americans, and North Beach dharma bums on the reworlding path to “become ‘born-again’ natives of Turtle Island” (“Coming into the Watershed,” 234). Snyder’s ecumene is an ecologically interconnected, planetary, and reнатivized counter-conversion to place.

In Snyder’s earlier essay on urban place, “North Beach” (reprinted in *The Old Ways*), the poet enacts an uncanny biopoetics of the region as contado and as counterhistory and counterculture. North Beach is portrayed as a “non-Anglo” multicultural habitat where the Costanoan peoples had lived for over five thousand years in the Bay; it later became a place of Alta Californian dairy farms, before waves of Irish, Italian, Sicilian, Portuguese, Chinese (Cantonese and Hakka) and “even Basque sheepherders down from Nevada” settled in.60 Beneath the Transamerica Pyramid, Snyder conjures up “a tiny watershed divide at the corner of Green and Columbus,” where “northward a creek flowed” toward Fisherman’s Wharf, all covered by oblivious landfill now.61 By evoking remnants of the Pacific bioregion and the occluded history of settlement, Snyder aims at “hatching something else in America; pray it cracks the shell in time.” That something else is a vision of the bioregion that would connect place to living watersheds, a sense of bioregional belonging, and the influx of place-tied values that abide and
have come down to ecopoetics from Native America and global cultures of Asia and the Pacific.

In a much-cited essay called “Indigenous Articulations,” James Clifford applies the “articulation” theories of Stuart Hall and Antonio Gramsci on the coalitional forging of counterhegemony to offer a multiple-edged model of Pacific region making that he calls “subaltern region-making.”

Pacific indigenous peoples can creatively 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” (22–23). As in his early work 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” (31). Such a vision of place, land, and identity as “interdependent” 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” (ibid.), as Clifford summarizes Tjibaou’s gesture toward the island land and sea as world home in Oceania.

We can also thicken the meanings and tactics of Oceania via a well-situated anthology called Whetu Moana, in which ten Hawaiian poets figure prominently. Many of the poems are concerned with links not just to the people of the ‘āina but also 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 and poems of Native Hawaiian ecological recovery by Brandy Nalani McDougall. Crucially in 1976, and in waves of Pacific-crossing voyages afterward, the Hawaiian voyaging project Hoku‘leia began to remap the Polynesian triangle across Oceania and helped create this interconnected ocean of stars via native knowledge, techniques, and community-building forms cutting across nations and colonizing prejudices, as in Robert Sullivan’s eclectic waka assemblages in Star Waka and the countergeographies and indigenous ocean-sailing tactics of Santos Perez that I have touched on above.

If we think with and beyond Hau‘ofa’s crucial new vision of the Pacific, Oceania can become the framework for the forging of ecological solidarity; the site of alternative modes of Asian and Pacific, or Pacific and Asian, linkage and knowledge formation; and a mode of transforming social and regional practices and helping prod the making, shaping, and gathering of what I have been calling ecopoetics. Literature, as I have been arguing, can help us see such links and affects between ocean, self, and planet. Like geographical cultural studies, poetics can thus help us overcome and reframe what Lawrence Buell has called “the foreshortened or inertial aspect of [the]
environmental unconscious,” so that we can develop better modes of re-in-
habitation and a “watershed consciousness” of an Oceanian ethos that is
aware of our ties to rivers, shores, and the global commons of the ocean.64

Taking Care of the Body in Oceania: Olap’s Canoe

Citing Clifford’s evocation of New Caledonia as a connecting place to the
ocean world, Snyder’s oceanic ashram in Japan with Nanao Sakaki in Earth
House Hold and Jan Ken Po, Saijo’s ocean-facing Big Island in OUTSPEAKS,
Sullivan’s waka assemblages; and renativizing Taiwan’s turn into a coun-
termainland site aligned to Oceania, as in the work of Hsinya Huang and
others, I have (here and elsewhere) been trying to overcome the taken-for-
granted view of an Asia/Pacific imaginary with Asian cultures and sites cast
as transnational capital forces of globalization and set relentlessly against
the interior Pacific—which is figured as a raw resource, fantasy site, va-
cancy, and/or source of subaltern or diasporic labor. I have aimed to pro-
duce a multiple-edged vision of ecological solidarity in the region: “We [cul-
ture workers, critical theorists, teachers] can seek the antagonistic synergy
of Asia/Pacific forces, flows, linkages, and networks.”65 With wry wit and
capacious-hearted humor Hau’ofa often implied that this was possible in
his own first-person-plural evocations, as when he left that catholic “we”
of oceanic solidarity open and underspecified in the title We Are the Ocean,
thus making us capable of expansive coalition building inside and across
the Pacific and the world: we are the ocean indeed, in some fundamental
ecological sense of body and world.66

As Sylvia Earle wrote in Time magazine in 1996 (in an article Hau’ofa
was fond of citing), “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.”67
We know from effects like El Niño and polar melting that the sea shapes
weather and climate patterns, and its moisture stabilizes and replenishes the
fresh water in rivers, lakes, and streams. We are the Ocean in our very bod-
ies as well, since each living person is some 60–70 percent water. As Milton
Murayama, a Japanese author from Maui, memorably advised, “take care
da body,” and you may just take care of the place, soul, and other creatures
on earth as well.68

The aim of this essay has been to open Oceania up to a Pacific-affiliated
ecopoetics of translocal solidarity, place, and bioregional worlding that is
being built up across the Pacific Ocean and that writers like Sakaki, Snyder,
Westlake, Richard Hamasaki (who sometimes uses the pen name red flea)
and Saijo have long stood for in their “transpacific dharma wanderings.” Whether I have succeeded or not, the ocean that we are part of will long know and the planet will feel the consequences of our ecopoetic gestures and activities for generations to come. One last ecopoetic image: in a section called “Flows” in *Asia/Pacific as Space of Cultural Production* collection, Dirlik and I included a translation by Theophil Saret Reuney of an ocean-based aboriginal work from Truk (in the Federated States of Micronesia) called “The Pulling of Olap’s Canoe.” The work and its elaborate footnotes, with untranslatable coinages and unfillable gaps, are full of names for places, birds, whales, plants, waves, rocks, navigation customs, islands, and 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].”

Reuney, like the beloved Epeli Hau’ofa, has passed away. But Reuney’s works are being used by linguists and biologists (like Alan Davis in his compilation of a Chuuk lexicon at a University of Guam archive site) to compile Chuukese names for plants and animals, some of which are now extinct, and by the cultural studies scholar 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 across the Anthropocene. Clearly the world of Olap’s ocean is endangered and full of ecological pathos, as when Reuney’s footnote 48, to the line “You delve deeply into the fish of mataw anu,” records that for the name *mataw anu*, the “meaning is ambiguous, especially since the type of fish is unknown.”

Notes


4. See, for example, James Clifford, Returns: Becoming Indigenous in the Twenty-First Century (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), with its chapter on “Hau’ofa’s Hope” as a quasi-utopic vision of the reindigenizing Pacific “necessarily entangled with other, more ambivalent, scenarios and dystopias” (212).

5. Arjun Appadurai writes: “The image, the imagined, the imaginary—these are all terms which direct us to something critical and new in global cultural processes: the imagination as social practice. No longer mere fantasy (opium for the masses whose real work is elsewhere), no longer simple escape (from a world defined principally by more concrete purposes and structures), no longer elite pastime (thus not relevant to the lives of ordinary people) and no longer mere contemplation (irrelevant for new forms of desire and subjectivity), the imagination has become an organized field of social practices, a form of work (both in the sense of labor and of culturally organized practice) and a form of negotiation between sites of agency (‘individuals’) and globally defined fields of possibility” (“Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Capitalist System,” Public Culture 2, no. 2 [1990]: 5).


10. Meditating on the semiotics and politics of “Oceania,” Hau’ofa admits having in mind the Pacific pidgin term “Wansolwara,” the name of 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). See “The Ocean in Us,” 114–17.

11. Wilson, Be Always Converting, Be Always Converted, 126.


13. From Saint Augustine to Ralph Waldo Emerson and Marshall McLuhan (as in his televised talk with Father Patrick Peyton), God was commonly defined as “a circle whose center is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere.”


15. As Felix Guattari elaborates on the Greek origin of the term, “ecology” derives from a complex of “house, domestic property, habitat, natural milieu,” meaning the geo-


19. Mark Twain wrote: “For a day or two we have been plowing [in the Pacific near Fiji] among an invisible vast wilderness of islands, catching now and then a shadowy glimpse of a member of it. There does seem to be a prodigious lot of islands this year; the map of this region is freckled and fly-specked all over with them” (Following the Equator: A Journey around the World [New York: P. F. Collier and Sons, 1899], 72).


26. Dirlik, “Asia Pacific Studies in an Age of Global Modernity.” For further references to this work, I will provide page numbers in parentheses in the text.


32. Epeli Hau’ofa, *Tales of the Tikongs* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1994). For further references to this work, I will provide page numbers in parentheses in the text.

33. Epeli Hau’ofa, *Kisses in the Nederends* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1995). For further references to this work, I will provide page numbers in parentheses in the text.

34. Christopher L. Connery, “Pacific Rim Discourse: The U.S. Global Imaginary in the Late Cold War Years,” in *Asia/Pacific as Space of Cultural Production*, 40.


36. For further references to Hau’ofa, *We Are the Ocean*, I will provide page numbers in parentheses in the text.

37. Vilsoni Hereniko, an ally of Hau’ofa’s in Pacific literary and cultural studies, director of the Pacific Studies Center at the University of Hawai’i, and successor to Hau’ofa as director of the Oceanian arts center at the University of the South Pacific in Suva, offered me astute feedback on the issue of how, and to what extent, Hau’ofa excluded Asians from Oceania and the material national history of the Pacific. Hereniko pointed out, at my keynote talk at the 2010 School of Pacific and Asian Studies Conference at the University of Hawai’i at Manoa, through historical anecdote and critical reflection, that Hau’ofa did more than anyone to support the Indian settlers in Fiji 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. Thus, too, less capacious forms of Pacific- and Oceania-based identity had often become a way of including or excluding “Asia” (another vague term) and Asians (like those Indo-Fijians whose families had labored in Fiji for four and five generations) from linking the subaltern regional Pacific to art, culture, social vision, ecology and so on.


41. Lawson Inada, “Shrinking the Pacific,” in *Asia/Pacific as Space of Cultural Production*, 80–81.

43. Fredric Jameson, “New Literary History after the End of the New,” *New Literary History* 39, no. 3 (2008): 375–387. For example, Jameson writes: “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” (ibid., 379).


45. Wilson, *Be Always Converting, Be Always Converted*, 139.


50. Albert Saijo, *OUTSPEAKS: A Rhapsody* (Honolulu: Bamboo Ridge, 1997), 73–74, 163. For further references to this work, I will provide page numbers in parentheses in the text.

51. Craig Santos Perez, *from Unincorporated Territory [hacha]* (Honolulu: Tinfish,
Toward an Ecopoetics of Oceania

2008), *from Unincorporated Territory [saina]* (Richmond, CA: Omindawn, 2010), and *from Unincorporated Territory [guma]* (Richmond, CA: Omindawn, 2014). For further references to these works, I will provide short titles and page numbers in parentheses in the text.

52. Aaron Shurin’s remark on “oceanic poetics” is taken from his endorsement on the back cover of Santos Perez, *Unincorporated Territory [saina]*.


56. If globalization discourse presumes that 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 Jean-Luc Nancy calls the earth-shattering values of the *immonde* or “glomus” (*The Creation of the World, or Globalization*, trans. Francois Raffoul and David Pettigrew [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007], 117 and 37) delivered to the planet by this world-becoming-market. Worlding—as a critical practice that my own work is affiliated to via this region making of Oceania—enacts the opening up 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 (such as an area or city) and given regional forms. The term “worlding” implies a fully culture-drenched and being-haunted process of dedistancing the ever-globalizing world of technological domination and its badly managed nuclearized standing reserve troops. As a gerund, “worlding” turns a noun (world) into a verb, thus shifting the taken-for-granted forms of the market and war into yet-to-be-generated and remade forms. As such a gerundive process of situated articulation and world making, worlding helps 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’s horizon come near and become local, informed, situated, and instantiated as an uneven or incomplete material process of world becoming. See Rob Wilson, “Worlding as Future Tactic,” in *The Worlding Project*, 211–12.

57. Wilson, *Be Always Converting, Be Always Converted*, 15.


61. Ibid., 6.
62. James Clifford, “Indigenous Articulations,” in The Worlding Project, 23. For further references to this work, I will provide page numbers in parentheses in the text.


64. Lawrence Buell, Writing for an Endangered World: Literature, Culture, and Environment in the U.S. and Beyond (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 22. For more on oceanic and riverine ecopoetics, see especially chapters 6 and 8.

65. Wilson, Be Always Converting, Be Always Converted, 139.

66. I. Frazer from Dunedin, New Zealand, captures this implicit sense of coalition building in We Are the Ocean in a customer review on Amazon.com: “[This collection] will be of interest to everyone who knows his [Hau’ofa’s] work and who shares his optimism and passion for the Pacific—which he preferred to call, in the spirit of pan-Pacific co-operation and inclusiveness, Oceania” (“Valuable Collection from Famous Pacific Academic and Writer,” March 19, 2009, Amazon.com, http://www.amazon.com/We-Are-Ocean-Selected-Works/dp/082483173X/ref=sr_1_2?ie=UTF8&qid=1432441609&sr=8-2&keywords=We+Are+the+Ocean, accessed May 27, 2015; emphasis mine).

67. Quoted in Hau’ofa, We Are the Ocean, 52.


