BORDERWATERS

Amid the Archipelagic States of America

BRIAN RUSSELL ROBERTS

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For Johnny Frisbie and the slate carvers at Topaz.

For Norma and William and Sierra,

who read and talked about Frisbie and visited Topaz with me.

For an archive like the waves of the sea.

CONTENTS

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INTRODUCTION

Archipelagic Thinking and the Borderwaters: *A US-Eccentric Vision*

An Ocean Nation and Its Noncanonical Borders

In 2013 two scholars at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology published a "Territorial Map of the World" that drew attention to the boundaries that currently exist between and among all of the planet's sovereign nation-states. As one would expect, in representing the United States, the map registers the US-Mexico border to the south and the US-Canada border to the north. These two borders, of course, are *the* borders of the United States, canonized within traditional and popular thought. And as is intoned by the well-known patriotic hymn, between these two canonical borders the United States extends "from sea to shining sea"—it extends as a vast continental nation of fruited plains and purple mountains and fields of grain, with a manifest destiny whose only east-west limits have been the seemingly nonnational and apolitical blank spaces of the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. And yet the "Territorial Map of the World," created by Rafi Segal and Yonatan Cohen, offers a substantial jolt to the traditional continental US narrative precisely because it does not represent shorelines as naturally imposed boundaries but instead moves toward an apprehension of the United States as a nation whose boundaries extend into heretofore uncanonized waters. As the creators explain, "This political map of the world depicts the extent of territories, both on land and at sea . . . , which are under the control of all independent nations. The map incorporates Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs), which are sea zones whose resources belong to their coastal . . . nations. International law defines these zones as lying within a 200 nautical mile . . . geometrical offsetting" from a nation's coasts.[1] As one might imagine, however, many coastal countries are not able to claim the full two hundred nautical miles of ocean without having their claims bump into those of their neighboring nation-states, and consequently, as Segal and Cohen note, we see international assumptions and treaties that demarcate sometimes ambiguous maritime boundaries. Furthermore, as their map bears out, we see a proliferation of borders—a proliferation that takes us far beyond the United States' canonized borders with Mexico and Canada. In the Caribbean, aside from bordering Mexico, the United States borders Cuba, the Bahamas, the Dominican Republic, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and Venezuela (see fig. I.1). (The United States also has borders with Haiti and Jamaica, though the "Territorial Map of the World" does not register the contested US claim to Navassa Island that makes this so.) Meanwhile, in the Pacific the United States unexpectedly borders Japan, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Marshall Islands, the Independent State of Samoa, Tokelau, the Cook Islands, Niue, Tonga, New Zealand, and Kiribati (see figs. I.2 and I.3). Still another portion of the map reminds us that in the north the United States borders not only Canada but also Russia (see fig. I.4).

While popular discussions in US media often use the phrase *the border* as an unambiguous stand-in for the US-Mexico border, and while more attentive conversations may remind us that the boundary between the US and Canada is *also* a border, and while certain leaders in government may occasionally refer to the entire Caribbean as the United States' "third border," few US citizens or US watchers throughout the world will recognize the version of the United States of America—with its unforecasted surfeit of borders revealing it to be contiguous with some twenty-one countries—that becomes visible when we examine US maritime claims as they appear on Segal and Cohen's map.[2] And yet it is not as if this version of the United States were a secret, as if this terraqueous view of the country were accessible only via an archive one might become privy to through a Freedom of Information Act request. Indeed, as of the present writing, the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) makes all of this clear on its website, on a page titled "Maritime Zones and Boundaries." On the topic of the two-hundred-mile EEZ, NOAA draws from the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS):

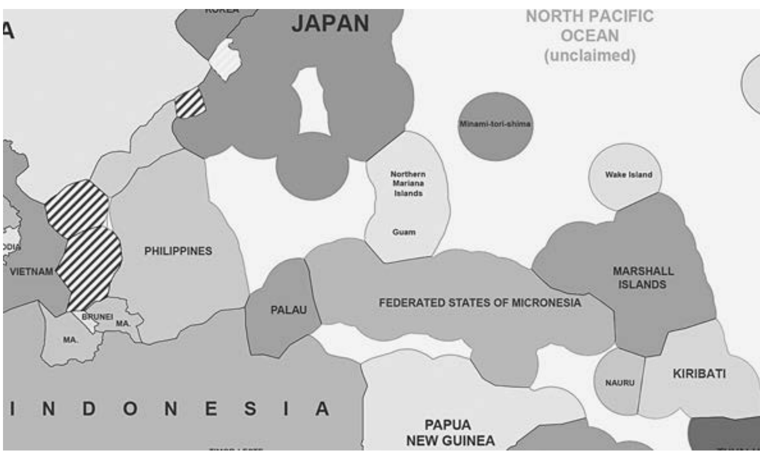
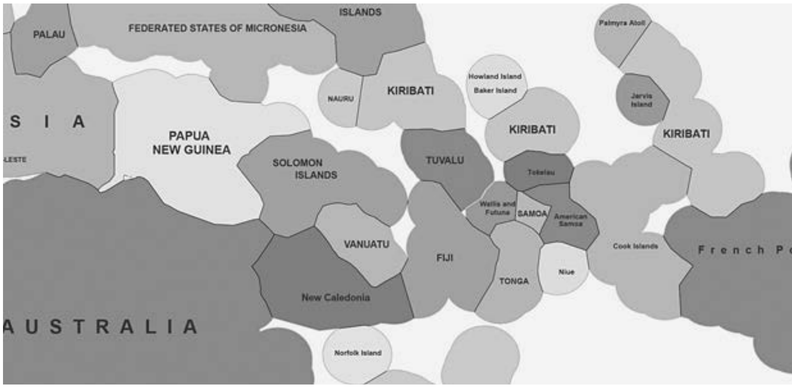


FIGURE 1.1 — US borders in the Caribbean. In this excerpt from Rafi Segal and Yonatan Cohen's "Territorial Map of the World," we see the US continent's land and maritime borders with Mexico but also the continent's maritime borders with Cuba and the Bahamas; also, via Puerto Rico and the adjacent US Virgin Islands, we see that the United States borders the Dominican Republic, the United Kingdom (via the British Virgin Islands and via Anguilla at a single point), the Netherlands (via Saba), and Venezuela. The map does not, however, register the US claim to the uninhabited Navassa Island, situated between Haiti and Jamaica, which affords the US a maritime border with both of those countries as well. This and other excerpts are from Rafi Segal and Yonatan Cohen, "Territorial Map of the World," *openDemocracy: Free Thinking for the World*, October 7, 2013, https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/territorial-map-of-world/. Courtesy of Rafi Segal and Yonatan Cohen.

FIGURE 1.2 — Some US borders in the Pacific, from "Territorial Map of the World." Via the Northern Mariana Islands and Guam, the United States borders the Federated States of Micronesia and Japan; via Wake Island, it borders the Marshall Islands.



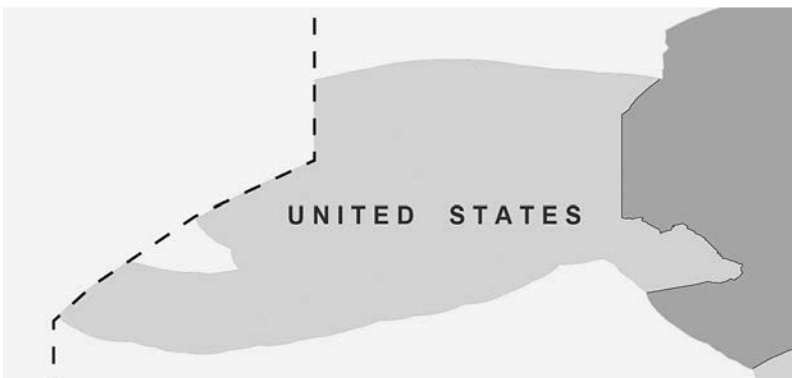


FIGURE 1.3 — Further US borders in the Pacific, from "Territorial Map of the World." Via American Samoa, the United States borders the Independent State of Samoa, Tokelau, the Cook Islands, Niue, and Tonga (thus, it borders New Zealand as well; although Tokelau, the Cook Islands, and Niue are regarded as sovereign countries, their residents are citizens of New Zealand). The United States also borders Kiribati, via the US territories of Palmyra Atoll, Jarvis Island, Howland Island, and Baker Island.

FIGURE 1.4 — Alaska's borders with Russia and Canada, from "Territorial Map of the World." Segal and Cohen's map is divided in such a way that it does not foreground Alaska's proximity to Russia, but the dotted line in this detail of the map indicates where Russia abuts the US EEZ. Meanwhile, to the east we see some of the United States' land and maritime border with Canada.

> Within its EEZ, a coastal State has: (a) sovereign rights for the purpose of exploring, exploiting, conserving and managing natural resources, whether living or nonliving, of the seabed and subsoil and the superadjacent waters and with regard to other activities for the economic exploitation and exploration of the zone, such as the production of energy from the water, currents and winds; (b) jurisdiction as provided for in international law with regard to the establishment and use of artificial islands, installations, and structures, marine scientific research, and the protection and preservation of the marine environment, and (c) other rights and duties provided for under international law.[3]

The discussion explains that the United States has subscribed to the maritime doctrine of the EEZ since 1983, and NOAA provides readers with a map of the US EEZ that is titled "The United States is an Ocean Nation" (see fig. I.5).[4] Though it does not represent the countries with which the United States shares its maritime boundaries, this map on the NOAA website outlines approximately the same EEZ as is found on Segal and Cohen's 2013 map, and it offers the following caption: "The U.S. exclusive economic zone (EEZ) extends 200 nautical miles offshore, encompassing diverse ecosystems and vast natural resources, such as fisheries and energy and other mineral resources. The U.S. EEZ is the largest in the world, spanning over 13,000 miles of coastline and containing 3.4 million square miles of ocean—larger than the combined land area of all fifty states."[5]

Consider the contrast between that caption's uncharacteristic sense of US oceanic nationalism and the deeply conventional continental nationalism that persists into the present within the current US passport, the very document that regulates US citizens' ability to move beyond the United States' few land borders and its preponderant number of water borders. The passport's continental nationalism surfaces pronouncedly in many of the historical quotations that appear as epigraphs on the visa pages. Whereas NOAA directs readers to a map that trumpets the United States' oceanic EEZ as "the largest in the world," the US passport advances Horace Greeley's famous nineteenth-century endorsement of continental manifest destiny: "Go west, young man, and grow up with the country." Whereas NOAA points readers to a map that outlines an oceanic territory that is "larger than the combined land area of all fifty states," the passport has President Lyndon B. Johnson reminding US Americans of the specific landed forms of the United States' fundamentally continental geography: "For this is what America is all about. It is the uncrossed desert and the unclimbed ridge."[6] And whereas NOAA turns our image of the United States

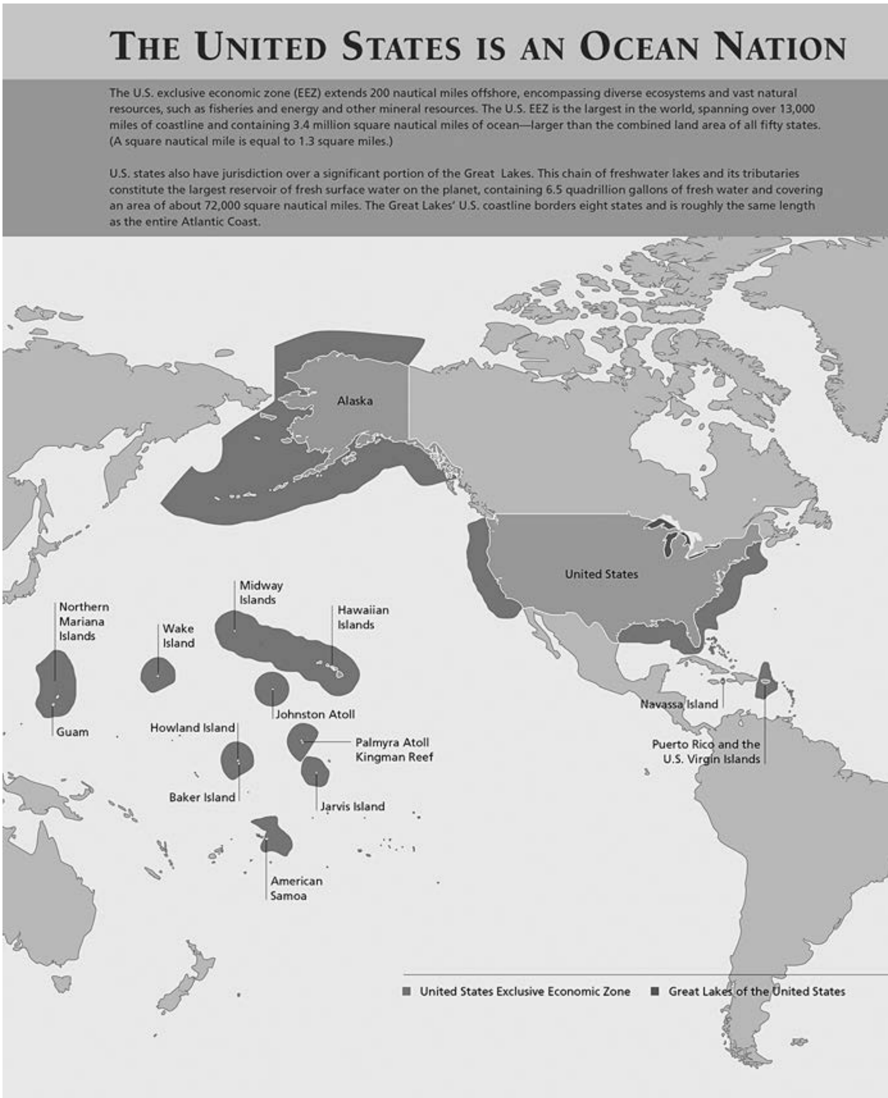


FIGURE 1.5 — Map portraying the United States as an ocean nation. "The United States is an Ocean Nation," NOAA Office of General Counsel, accessed August 24, 2020, https://www.gc.noaa.gov/documents/2011/012711_gcil_maritime_eez_map.pdf.

inside out by calling it "an ocean nation," the passport showcases two quotations on the transcontinental railroad. Jessamyn West, a US novelist, describes this railroad as "a big iron needle stitching the country together," while on another visa page we read the aspiration inscribed on the Golden Spike at Promontory Summit in Utah: "May God continue the unity of our country as the railroad unites the two great oceans of the world." But lest we forget that what is geographically central is not the uniting of two oceans but rather the continental landmass that extends from sea to shining sea, the passport advances Theodore Roosevelt's words: "This is a new nation based on a mighty continent, of boundless possibilities."[7]

Of course, even as Roosevelt imagined the United States as firmly based on the continent, he believed the country had claim on a new form of seagoing manifest destiny that was not hemmed in by the continent's shorelines.[8] During the final decade of the nineteenth century, with the Spanish-American War, a US imperial archipelago became the very object of what Roosevelt famously described as the United States' manly dedication to maintaining a "strenuous life."[9] "We cannot avoid," he intoned in the introduction to his 1900 volume *The Strenuous Life*, "the responsibilities that confront us in Hawaii, Cuba, Porto Rico, and the Philippines."[10] Yet even as manifest destiny overflowed the continent and mixed with the oceans—indeed, even as Roosevelt called for "the isthmian canal . . . which will enable us to have our say in deciding the destiny of the oceans of the East and the West"—he reaffirmed, in 1917, the continent's primacy: if there was a destiny to be had in the saltwater, the United States nevertheless remained stalwartly "based on a mighty continent."[11] Still strenuous after all these years, these are the continental presumptions now enshrined on the visa pages of the US passport.

One need not look far for the material ramifications of the United States' long-running and dual movement of seeking destiny in the oceans even while denying—on the stage of popular and judicial politics—full national identity to the noncontinental accruals of the country's seagoing manifest destiny. Looking back to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, one may recall the US Supreme Court's Insular Cases, which determined "that the US Constitution does not apply fully to territories acquired through conquest after the Spanish-American War and the signing of the Treaty of Paris in 1898," with the "practical effect" even today of "refusing application of constitutional protections . . . to people recognized as US citizens."[12] The Insular Cases' ramifications are showcased in CHamoru (Chamorro) poet and activist Craig Santos Perez's 2017 poem

"Guam, Where America's Voting Rights End," in which Perez reminds us that even if the United States has a president like Barack Obama, invested in "civil rights" and hailing "from the Pacific," the island of Guam (a US territory to which the Insular Cases apply) "remains a forgotten name," a place where US citizens live without US constitutional protections. Perez's poem flatly recalls that "Obama only visited Guam once," a lackluster visit in 2011 during which "his plane landed at night on the air force base, / refueled, then departed."[13]

Of course, President Obama, at the time of his 2011 stopover, was grappling with difficulties that stemmed in part from the very Pacific connections that Perez mentions in his poem. It was no doubt anti-Black racism that undergirded birtherism's bad-faith contention, during and around the Obama presidency, that Obama was not born in the United States and hence was ineligible for the office to which he had been elected. Yet this racism existed in a state of interanimation with the subtler and less recognized tradition of viewing *only* the continental United States as properly *the* United States, while viewing archipelagic spaces as irretrievably foreign. Consider the Twitter feed of birtherism's most visible and influential proponent, who peppered his birtherist conspiracy theories with references to Hawai'i and Indonesia, the former being Obama's birthplace and the latter being one of his homes as a child.[14] (Had President Obama been white, been born on the US continent, and attended grade school for a time in continental Europe, would anyone have cast suspicion on his birth in the United States? The case of Franklin Delano Roosevelt stands as a stark counterpoint.) In light of this anti-insularity, it was unsurprising, a few years later, that when President Donald Trump's religiously discriminatory attempt to ban people from several predominantly Muslim countries was blocked by Judge Derrick Watson of the federal district court in Hawai'i in April 2017, the head of the US Department of Justice, attorney general Jeff Sessions, spoke in a way that mixed the Trump administration's overt efforts at religious discrimination with continental exceptionalism's enmity toward island spaces. "I really am amazed," reeled the head of the US Department of Justice, "that a judge sitting on an island in the Pacific can issue an order that stops the president of the United States."[15]

As a Caribbean-oriented follow-up to Sessions's remarkable dismissal of the US state of Hawai'i for its geographic situation as an archipelago in the Pacific, we saw the Trump administration's reaction to Hurricane Maria as it devastated the US territory of Puerto Rico in September of the same year. While reactivating stereotypes of Latinas/os as lazy ("They want everything to be done for them," tweeted the commander in chief), President Trump made landlocked and continentalist excuses for his administration's torpid response to the hurricane: "This is an island, surrounded by water. Big water. Ocean water." At another point: "It's very tough, because it's an island. . . . In Texas, we can ship the trucks right out there. . . . But the difference is, this is an island sitting in the middle of an ocean. And it's a big ocean; it's a very big ocean."[16] About a year later, after a death toll of nearly three thousand lives in Puerto Rico came into focus, Fabiola Santiago of the *Miami Herald* pointed out the anomaly of Trump's self-congratulatory stance regarding what he continued to describe as his "fantastic" response to Hurricane Maria. Santiago wrote, "Let the astonishing statistic for a small island of 3.7 million people sink in, and ask: Would anyone be congratulating themselves on the rescue and recovery job done if this had happened in Florida or anywhere else in the continental United States?" Santiago continued, gesturing to the fact that the United States has the most powerful navy in the world, "Nor is it impossible for a country like the United States with extremely well-funded military operations to get quick aid to an island just because it's surrounded by water, as Trump said in his childish explanation of why it took so long to appropriately respond to the disaster."[17]

As salutary as the US institution of liberal democracy can often feel, minorities in the United States—whether racial, ethnic, religious, political, LGBTQ, or others—have long needed to contend with what Alexis de Tocqueville once called "the tyranny of the majority," a tyranny that permits the majority, many times by design but often without thinking, to pass laws, make policies, and advance cultural norms that place minority populations at still greater disadvantage.[18] Indeed, this tyranny functions, as Lisa Lowe has pointed out, to buoy up liberal democracy's capital-driven commitment to "the social productions of 'difference,' of restrictive particularity and illegitimacy marked by race, nation, geographical origins, and gender."[19] As I discuss further in chapter 2 of this study, within the United States the demographically based tyranny of the majority has operated in tandem with a geographically based analogue—the tyranny of the continent, which has fetishized continental vastness and coded islands as inferior, espousing the exceptional status of the US continental state even while functioning to legitimize imperialism among islands and oceans beyond the continent's shores. Thomas Paine's 1776 pronouncements in *Common Sense* offer something of an origin story for the mode of continental tyranny that has extended from the country's beginnings into the present day. "Small islands," Paine argued, are proper "for kingdoms to take under their care; but there is something very absurd, in supposing a continent to be perpetually governed by an island."[20] Here we see that the blueprint for US sovereignty from insular England was sketched in big structures across the vast continent, while the political-geographic logic for a future US empire of "small islands" was already in place at the US founding, giving rise to a project that has, to borrow from Walter D. Mignolo and Catherine E. Walsh, "engendered coloniality and disguised it by the promises and premises of modernity."[21] This logic and project set up the preconditions for President Obama's 2011 stopover in Guam and the Trump administration's dismissal of Hawai'i and dilatory response to devastation in Puerto Rico.

We see a tension between the country's canonical and mythic continental borders and its noncanonical and material oceanic borders. As much as the tyranny of the continent has remained active in US political rhetoric as we enter the third decade of the twenty-first century, and even as it has had profound material consequences for the emergence and continued existence of a US empire of small islands, the United States' fetishization of its continental vastness lost its geographically material warrant in 1983, when the country became, as relayed by NOAA, "an ocean nation," embracing the doctrine of the EEZ and thereby claiming an ocean area larger than the land area of all fifty states. In other words, while present-day US demographers take pains to accurately forecast a date in the future when the United States will no longer be a majority-white country (and while prominent modes of demagoguery in the United States seek to mobilize white voting and vigilante constituencies by playing on white fears of the new tyrannies that a future nonwhite majority may usher in), scholarly and popular perception of US geography has largely fallen asleep with regard to a crucial shift that has long since taken place: owing to the EEZ's interactions with the islands and archipelagoes that are claimed as US territories, the United States lost its hallowed geographic status as a majority-continent nation nearly four decades ago.[22] It became a majority-ocean nation.

In the introduction to our edited collection *Archipelagic American Studies* (2017), Michelle Ann Stephens and I traced some ways in which the US transformation from majority-continent to majority-ocean was underway long before the arrival of UNCLOS in 1982. We have pointed to several watershed moments as preconditions for this transformation: the

Guano Islands Act of 1856, the Spanish-American War of 1898, the illegal annexation of Hawai'i in the same year, the purchase of American Samoa in 1899, and US control of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands after World War II and into the 1980s and 1990s. We argued that "as the energies of Manifest Destiny shifted from wayfaring across the continent to seafaring in the Caribbean and the Pacific, the United States constructed an imperial archipelago that deformed—stretched, twisted, and finally fractured—[the country's] entity status to the point of a topological shift," wherein a shift in the topology or form of national geography constituted a shift in national ontology.[23] With this ontological shift, the United States has moved from Paine's vision of US American sovereignty stemming from its fundamental continental form, to Roosevelt's affirmation that the imperial United States of the early twentieth century continued to be *based* on a continent, to NOAA's astounding assertion that (as stated by the map title) "The United States is an Ocean Nation." The iconic stars that spangle a field of blue: these have represented US states to generations of schoolchildren. But might NOAA's articulation of the country admit a new symbology, wherein the canonized US states and the territorial US states may be seen to flow into one another, to mingle and grate against each other in the blue waters, amid the storms and stresses of an ocean nation that has, contra Paine, no nature-inscribed logic for sovereignty, coherence, or existence? The flag's star-spangled blue ocean, then, becomes a site amenable to the existential seeking described in 1946 by the US American writer Carlos Bulosan, who was a US national because he was born in the US territory of the Philippines but who was nonetheless ineligible for US citizenship. Bulosan at one point envisioned stars floating in the blue ocean—in desperation and hope at what he found while reading literature in the continental United States, he imagined "boring through the earth's core, leveling all seas and oceans, swimming in the constellations."[24] What constellations might we swim among, in an ocean spangled with a gyre of canonical and noncanonical US states? What are the borders and waters that imperfectly divide and incompletely unify these states of grating coalitions and dissensions, histories and futures?

Whether or not we adopt NOAA's phrase "ocean nation," the purpose of the present study is not to play into the notions of geographic majority and minority that have undergirded the tyranny of the continent during the course of centuries. *Borderwaters* does not seek to usher in continental tyranny's mirror image, a tyranny of the ocean, by simply presenting readers with a version of national geography in which the United States is the largest oceanic nation in the world, with claims to oceanic territory that exceed its claims to continental territory, and with claims, furthermore, to only a minority share of the very continent to which it has staked its popular geographic self-perception as a nation. As close as that view might hew to the materiality of the lands and waters that the United States claims as its territory, modes of predictable and unpredictable demagoguery would lurk within this tack's continued fetishization of geographic size. Hence, *Borderwaters*, even as it works to undercut continental exceptionalism, does not pit the ocean or the island against the continent. And it is certainly not an endorsement of any past or present US land or water claims, many of which have been and continue to be legitimately contested by Indigenous groups, and all of which (however permanent the present-day borders of the United States may seem) will certainly shift and even disappear in the future, depending on how distant a future we set our sights on. Rather, *Borderwaters* is concerned with what the volume *Archipelagic American Studies* describes as "'the archipelagic Americas,' or the temporally shifting and spatially splayed set of islands, island chains, and island-ocean-continent relations which have exceeded US Americanism and have been affiliated with and indeed constitutive of competing notions of the Americas since at least 1492."[25] Within that collection's model, the archipelagic Americas span over five centuries and are not circumscribed by US imperialism, US territorial claims, or US existence. Consequently, essays in that volume interrogate the archipelagic Americas in space-times ranging from seventeenth-century Mexico to twenty-first-century New Zealand and Canada and from the Great Pacific Garbage Patch to the francophone Caribbean. Distinct from *Archipelagic American Studies* in scope and purpose, *Borderwaters* speaks to a more focused set of coordinates in space and time, redescribing the United States and its planetary embeddedness in a way that finds touchstones in twentieth-century cultural-ecological events: epoch-defining scholarly narratives regarding the United States, nuclear weapons that rescript warfare and wreak environmental devastation, hurricanes in the Pacific and Caribbean, literary writings that are geoformally attentive, US deployments of non-Euclidean geometries amid the oceans, the World War II–era carving of stone containing fossils of half-a-billion-year-old sea creatures, a world's fair that turned the Pacific into a pageant. These and other events set up the preconditions for the United States' late twentieth-century territorial shift to a terraqueous national ontology and the early twenty-first-century possibilities of its emergence as self-conscious regarding this shift. In so doing, *Borderwaters* disrupts the continent's exceptionalist and even tyrannical claims by giving place to the interrelated land-water complexes of the archipelago and the borderwaters.

What Is an Archipelago?

Because I do not want to pit the preponderant materialities of US ocean and island spaces against the enduring if geographically unmoored metaphor of the United States as a fundamentally continental nation, I gravitate in this study toward the term *archipelago*, along with its adjectival form, *archipelagic*. (Pronouncing the latter term can be a bit tricky for many English speakers, but it is central enough to this study that it warrants mention that, based on the guidance of reputable dictionaries, speakers of US and British English should pronounce *archipelagic* so that the initial *arch-* rhymes with *snark* and the final *-lagic* rhymes with *magic*.[26]) The term *archipelago* has the benefit of operating very clearly at the intersection of the material and the metaphorical. It also admits, like the allied term *terraqueous*, both water and land (including, as we shall see, continents) to its suite of ontological and epistemological concerns. In its entry for the term *archipelago*, the *Oxford English Dictionary* (*OED*), in both the second edition of 1989 and the current online edition, notes that the word derives from the Italian *arcipelago*, with *arci-* signifying "chief, principal" and *-pelago* signifying "deep, abyss, gulf, pool." The entry clarifies that the term, while drawing on Greek roots, does not derive from "ancient or mediæval Greek" but developed first in early modern "western languages" such as Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, and French. From there, it was imported into Modern Greek. The *OED*'s first definition for *archipelago* appears as follows: "The Ægean Sea, between Greece and Asia Minor," with the first such usage listed as occurring in 1268 in a treaty "between the Venetians and the emperor Michael Palaeologus." The term's second definition points toward the planetary deployment of the first definition as a metaphor: "Hence (as [the Aegean] is studded with many isles): Any sea, or sheet of water, in which there are numerous islands; and [in a transferred sense] a group of islands." The dictionary's examples for this latter usage date from 1529 to about 1860, with the term *archipelago*, this erstwhile synonym for the Aegean, applied to island groups situated in what we now think of as Indonesia, the Arctic Ocean, the Pacific, and the North Atlantic.[27] Interestingly, the definitions and examples provided by the *OED*'s second and online editions remain unchanged from those included in the dictionary's first edition (1933) and, looking further back, unchanged from those included in the *OED*'s late nineteenth-century forerunner, *A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles* (*NED*). Indeed, as of the present writing, the online *OED* repeats verbatim the *NED*'s original definition and usage examples for *archipelago* as first offered in the 1880s.[28]

Within discussions of archipelagoes (whether in the humanities, social sciences, jurisprudence, or diplomacy), these 130-year-old definitions and etymologies, or their derivations, are widely cited. Indeed, we might consider the *NED*/*OED* as having provided a baseline narrative within archipelagic thought, namely, that the term *archipelago* arose as a name for the island-studded and material Aegean Sea and was subsequently applied metaphorically to other island-studded seas and to island groups throughout the world. This narrative is at once compact (contained in a single sentence) and astonishingly sweeping, unfolding over the course of centuries (from the thirteenth century to the twenty-first century) and comprehending, though only obliquely acknowledging, the planet-spanning conflicts (material and epistemic) that have been concomitant with continua of Indigenous knowledges; varied approaches and responses to colonization, empire, and liberalism; myriad processes of creolization and *mestizaje*; postcolonial and decolonial thought and practice; developments in human perception of terraqueous materialities and objects, including oceans, islands, and continents; efforts in linguistic and cultural translation; and schemes of active and passive miscommunication, genocide, enslavement, liberation, trans-Indigenous solidarities, and cultural reconstitutions and grapplings with neoliberalism. These vectors, together with uncounted other events that contribute to a skyward-growing pile of what the proverbial Benjaminian angle of history might see as debris, constitute the backdrop that informed, and was reciprocally informed by, the processes by which a term for the Aegean Sea came to be applied metaphorically to groups of islands that span the planet.[29]

I have underscored a contrast between, on the one hand, the pat and unchanging definition of *archipelago* as conveyed by the *OED* and, on the other hand, the messy and mercurial historical, epistemological, and ontological struggles and processes that exist not as a dynamic backdrop for a static term but as the historical dynamo for what I also take to be the dynamic, shimmering term *archipelago*. In other words, as intriguing and useful as the *OED*'s historically informed and etymologically based definitions are, the dictionary definition is far from adequate for this study's approach to a long twentieth century's US American subset of the archipelagic Americas. I am unaware that any scholar has undertaken, to any substantial degree, a project that has sought to document the multilanguage historical processes that undergird the archipelagic narrative implied in the *NED/OED*. Such a project would require a facility not only with English, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, French, Dutch, and other colonial languages but also with the host of Indigenous languages spoken by the many groups whose members in various ways resisted, succumbed to, and stood apart from invasion and colonization by speakers of the colonizing languages. How might Taíno epistemologies regarding island interconnection have interacted with Spanish projections of Caribbean islands as a New World archipelago analogous to the Aegean? How have Polynesian methods of island grouping interacted with traditions of French archipelagic thought? What Indigenous notions of island linkages and separations have been lost or have persisted in the face of the Spanish and subsequent US American application of the archipelago concept to island groups such as the Philippines and the Marianas? How did the Dutch term *archipel* interface with fourteenth-century Javanese and later twentieth-century Indonesian notions of Nusantara?

Various facets of the answers to such questions must be acknowledged as, to borrow a phrase from George B. Handley, having "inevitably and irrevocably fallen into historical oblivion."[30] But for many of these questions, the oblivion is revocable, with its revocation contingent on scholars' linguistic facility. Still, the very question of linguistic facility presents a conundrum: imagine a Venn diagram illustrating the overlap between scholars with a research agenda in archipelagic thought and scholars who have facility with at least ten of the languages germane to planetary archipelagic research. I suspect that such a diagram would showcase a very limited degree of overlap. (I, for one, would not be present in the overlap.) And yet, to my mind, a sprawling comparative project—multilingual, long-durational, transregional, and involving multiple participants—would be one of the most urgent of all projects that could be undertaken in the realm of archipelagic thinking. Unsurprisingly, the Martinican philosopher Édouard Glissant has suggested that "translation is . . . among the elements most important within . . . archipelagic thought."[31] Far beyond the *NED/OED*'s concise historical definitions and sparsely documented usage examples, such a project would move toward asking and answering, in deeply material and culturally aware ways, a question that must lie at the very foundation of research into archipelagic thinking: What is an archipelago?

Derek Walcott once contemplated an analogous question: "What is the nature of the island?" He concluded he was not ready to answer it: "Except by hints. Contradictions. Terrors. The opposite method to the explorer's."[32] Neither does *Borderwaters* undertake anything close to the project that would be required to begin to answer such a question regarding the nature or natures of an archipelago. What this project *does*, however, is side with the messy and the mercurial—delving into, at various points, thought regarding issues of island-ocean-shoreline-continent relations as it has developed and at times cross-pollinated in English, French, Spanish, Indonesian, Japanese, and other languages, including, if it may be called a language, mathematics. Thus, readers will find that a definition of what an archipelago *is* grows by accretion throughout this study's five chapters, as *Borderwaters* traces various things that an archipelago *does* or is capable of doing, materially and epistemologically. But it is nonetheless worth stating at the outset certain assumptions that I am making about the nature—or multiple natures—of an archipelago, beyond the layperson's definition of an archipelago as a group of islands.

To start with, I have an exceedingly difficult time accepting the idea that an archipelago exists independent of some form of subjectivity. If an archipelago is a group of islands, then the grouping of material islands must take place by means of some subjective and relational heuristic. We see this in the postcolonial nationalism that became Indonesia's archipelagic heuristic, while Enlightenment racial classification became Melanesia's (the latter name referring to "the region of islands inhabited by dark-skinned peoples").[33] Elsewhere, we see commonality of magnitude among islands, as in the Lesser Antilles, or linguistic relation, as in Polynesia or the francophone Caribbean. In this way my understanding of an archipelago is allied with what we see in the Hawaiian language, which has two terms, *pae ʻāina* and *pae moku*, that may be translated into English as *archipelago*. Brandy Nālani McDougall has explained that these two terms "conceive of multiple lands as interconnected" and so "imply active human and state intervention in the creation of an archipelago."[34] And together with human and state interventions, I also admit alien, weird, or otherwise nonhuman subjectivities such as those exhibited by island-hopping birds, large monitor lizards swimming among islands, or the coral polyps that form the islets that constitute the archipelagic formation of an atoll—for this latter case, it might be said that the living islands themselves exhibit alien forms of thought capable of thinking archipelagically.[35] Analogous to the islands that make up an archipelago, the logs that make up a raft don't tie themselves together—someone or something is lashing the cords. Yet an archipelago is not made up of islands alone—it is a terraqueous complex that is also crucially constituted by the waters in which the islands exist. The *OED*'s etymological history informs us that centuries ago the term originally referred to the Aegean, or the *chief sea*, and only incidentally to the sea's many islands. During their decades-long fight for recognition as an "archipelagic State," diplomats from Indonesia resurrected the term's lost terraqueous definition and melded the *NED*/*OED* definition with some Indonesians' Indigenous traditions of referring to their archipelago as *tanah air*, a term usually translated into English as "homeland," in which *tanah* refers to land and *air* refers to water (more on this in chapter 3). Since the finalization of UNCLOS, which liberally incorporates Indonesian notions of archipelagic space into its definition of an "archipelagic State," the populations of every nation-state on the planet have been impacted by Indonesia's success in grafting the term *archipelago* onto an Indigenous etymology that situates water as a nonnegotiable component of archipelagic space.[36] Nodding toward the archipelago as a water-land complex, Juan Carlos Quintero Herencia has stated that an archipelago exists as the "consequence of activities and experiences that interweave themselves into interpretations" that then flow onto and into "islands and their waters, lands and their seas."[37]

Further, moving beyond descriptions of archipelagoes as groups of islands or island-water complexes, I take continents and temporality as crucial and in some ways interlinked components of an archipelagic frame. I am persuaded by Glissant's observations on continents *archipelagizing*, or reconfiguring themselves such that they attain a set of archipelagic relations within and among themselves but also with islands and oceans. Here Glissant is, to draw on Michael Wiedorn, taking the "exceptionality of the Caribbean as a template for the future of the world."[38] While I do not embrace Glissant's vision of the Caribbean as *the* exceptional template for relations across the planet, I nonetheless see acuity in Glissant's vision, for instance, when he looked at Europe and claimed, "Europe is turning into an archipelago. That is to say that beyond national barriers, we see many islands taking shape in relation to one another. . . . I feel it acutely in European life, which is becoming a sort of archipelago with [regional cultural] islands maintaining relations among themselves."[39] Elsewhere, he has observed that this process is occurring throughout the world, including in the Americas: "What I am seeing today is that continents are 'archipelagizing,' at least from an outsider's point of view. The Americas are archipelagizing—they are made up of regions *par-dessus les frontières nationales*."[40] I have permitted the closing phrase of this quotation to remain in Glissant's French because translating it outright would not do justice to what I see as its relation to the archipelagic United States. Most simply, the phrase might be translated as "beyond national borders," which for Glissant, in this context, likely points toward a proliferation of subnational entities or cultural islands whose cultures overflow national boundaries and thereby ask us to see beyond the borders of the nation-state.[41] And yet Glissant's statement on the archipelagization of the continental Americas might also be taken, in the context of the United States of America, as adumbrating the nation-state's constitution to a large extent by island-ocean regions that exist, to try out another translation, "beyond national frontiers," a phrase evocative of US American national frontiers that are classically continental. The terraqueous regions beyond the nation's continental frontiers may be cultural islands in the Glissantian sense. But they are also archipelagic spaces constituted by material oceans and material islands whose existence is in turn to a large extent constitutive of the United States of America and whose suite of archipelagic relationalities has transformed the continental United States into a swath of continental land that is and has been archipelagizing. Conventionally, archipelagic thinkers (whether in international law or cultural criticism) have started at the shoreline and asked how far seaward we might find archipelagic waters and archipelagic relationalities; in tandem, and also with the shoreline as a starting place, I ask how far inland we might find these archipelagic waters and relationalities. If the continent is archipelagizing, can archipelagic waters and relationalities be traced up a river, moving upstream like salmon swimming toward an ancestral spawning creek? Can they be engraved on a golden spike that unites two oceans, evocative of Walt Whitman's vision of "the earth to be spann'd, connected by network, / . . . . The oceans to be cross'd, the distant brought near"?[42]

Can they flood continents and turn hills into islands or even transform mountain ranges into island chains? To the topic of continents as archipelagoes, François Noudelmann has appended the question of temporality: "The continent itself can become an archipelago if we think of it differently, as . . . continually changing."[43] This is an image of archipelagic islands as not simply existing within a shimmering ocean but also, themselves, shimmering with change through their dynamic interrelations with the ocean, each other, and archipelagic continents. But this image of islands' shimmering temporalities does not agree with UNCLOS's definition of an island, which is also time dependent but at the same moment seems to bracket temporality by insisting on a definition based on a snapshot taken at one specific point within the tide's cycle. "An island is a naturally formed area of land, surrounded by water, which is above water at high tide," states UNCLOS in Part VIII, "Regime of Islands."[44] *Borderwaters* sides with the shimmering, with the temporal messiness of which UNCLOS is very much aware but that it wishes to forestall by recourse to a snapshot view that defines islands as only those entities that exist at high tide. Amid the messiness, an archipelago might consist of a set of islands that exist for only five minutes—all that is needed for a series of waves during a rising tide to break a sandbar into multiple pieces and then wash them away. Or, to compress things further, an archipelago might last a few milliseconds—constituted by the set of pebbles momentarily exposed near a shoreline as one ripple pulls back and another fillips forward. Moving into much vaster timescales, we might consider the work of Columbia University geologist Marshall Kay, who in the 1940s "made the connection between modern-day 'island arcs' (such as Japan, the Aleutians, the Philippines, the outer archipelago of Indonesia) and the fully consolidated linear mountain belts that we see on the continents."[45] Relating to this observation on the geographic form or topology held in common by mountain ranges and archipelagoes, Kay published a 1951 map visualizing the "paleogeography" of North America as he retrojected that it would have appeared just after the Cambrian period about half a billion years ago (see fig. I.6). On the map, the swath of land that would later become the continental United States is submerged hundreds of miles inland in many places, so that present-day mountain ranges become archipelagoes that flank North America to the east and west, while all of the remaining lands of the (future) continental United States appear not as fruited plains but as "coastal plain[s]" that span from archipelago to shining archipelago.

The archipelago of millisecond duration and the aeonic archipelagoes of North American paleogeography could not seem further from each other in terms of temporal duration, and yet geoformally the archipelago of the millisecond could stand in for the archipelago of the geologic age (a set of rocks off the coast). And indeed both of these archipelagoes—seemingly so far removed from a scale relevant to humans—could stand in geoformally for any number of archipelagoes that currently exist on a human temporal scale, whether these are archipelagoes that tragically

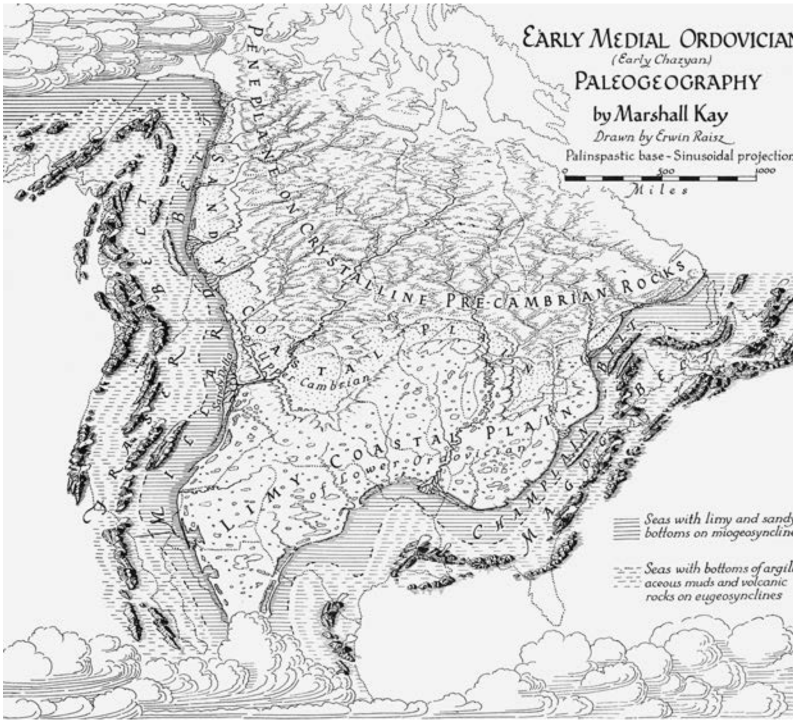


FIGURE 1.6 — "Paleogeography of Early Medial Ordovician of North America," drawn by Erwin Raisz. From Marshall Kay, *North American Geosynclines*, Geological Society of America memoir 48 (1951; repr., New York: Geological Society of America, 1963), xii.

may be on their way out (certain islands in the Pacific disappeared by extractive capitalism's global warming) or archipelagoes that are on their way in (California or the Carolinas literally archipelagized by that same global warming). The archipelago, then, as it shimmers through time and water, becomes a geographic form that permits human temporalities to link up—perhaps even to archipelagize—with nonhuman temporalities that have traditionally been bracketed rather than grappled with in the humanities and social sciences. In this version of the archipelago, humans may find access to that which is so temporally microscopic that it lies beyond the ken of even the most abusive of traditional close readings, as well as access to geologic and cosmological temporalities far beyond the multidecade spans of Franco Moretti's distant-reading projects, so vast as to evoke nihilistic reconceptualizations of humans as meaningless specks of dust floating across the stage lights of aeonic dramas.[46] In this way, the archipelago emerges as an answer to Wai Chee Dimock's question, as posed in a conversation on temporality with Mark McGurl, "Isn't it possible that the macro and the micro might be connected . . . [by] a layer of mediation we have yet to theorize, going back and forth between the micro and the macro, maintaining a nonrigid but also nontrivial distinction between the two?"[47]

Material, metaphorical, translational, terraqueous, archipelagizing, geoformal, and temporally scalar: these are some of the attributes of an archipelago that I assume at the outset. And if a shorthand definition of *archipelagic thinking* might be thinking that takes the archipelago as a thought template or even intellectual collaborator, then this same list of attributes would also be salient within archipelagic thought.[48] Further elaborations on archipelagic thinking will grow by accretion, and in dialogue with archipelagic thinkers hailing from various archipelagoes, throughout the chapters of this study. But with these initial attributes in mind, we may approach an important US Geological Survey publication that was issued seven times during the long twentieth century that *Borderwaters* addresses.

With a title that shifted over the decades, this publication originally appeared in 1885 as *Boundaries of the United States and of the Several States and Territories* and had its final publication in 1976 as *Boundaries of the United States and the Several States*.[49] The table of contents for the 1885 edition lists, beyond the eastern slice of the continent claimed by war and treaty from Great Britain and Indigenous nations, the following "additions to the territory of the United States": the Louisiana Purchase, Florida, Texas, the first Mexican cession, the Gadsden Purchase, and Alaska.[50] Between this first edition in 1885 and the final edition in 1976, we see many changes, with a proliferating variety of geographies added and taken away, as well as a dizzying variety of modes of governmentality vis-à-vis these geographies. The table of contents for the 1900 edition adds Hawai'i, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Philippines.[51] The 1904 edition adds American Samoa.[52] In 1923 the table of contents adds several new entries: Wake Island, the Panama Canal Zone, the US Virgin Islands, the Guano Islands (involving many nineteenth-century island claims in the Caribbean and Pacific), and claims related to Guantanamo, Wrangell Island, Tonga Islands, Yap Island, extraterritorial holdings such as diplomatic missions, and "territorial waters" that extend about three nautical miles off the coast.[53] The 1930 version adds discussions of the Isle of Pines off Cuba, the Great and Little Corn Islands off Nicaragua, Bennett Island

and others north of Siberia, islands in the North Pole region, and "air space over a state or nation."[54] In the 1966 version, the Philippines have disappeared from the list, while other geographies are added: Midway and Johnston Islands and Canton and Enderbury Islands (among the Guano Islands), as well as a new section that describes "interests of the United States beyond its borders," which includes Antarctica, military and naval bases, the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, and the underwater or submerged lands of the continental shelf.[55] When this publication was first issued (in 1885), the United States professed no boundaries except the seashore and those negotiated (often violently) with other entities on the North American continent.[56] In contrast, the 1976 version of *Boundaries of the United States and the Several States* explains, "In this paper, the phrase 'territory of the United States' includes areas under the sovereignty or jurisdiction of the United States. These areas extend over a large part of the earth; from Barrow, Alaska, on the north to American Samoa on the south, and from the Palau Islands in the western Pacific to the Virgin Islands in the Atlantic."[57] These four geodetic markers, so to speak, range from an Arctic town in a continental (albeit noncontiguous) US state to the islands of an unincorporated US territory in the Pacific where the flag flies without offering full constitutional rights, and from another such territory in the Caribbean to an archipelago that abuts Indonesia and is paradoxically referred to as US territory even while it is, as part of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, described in the same publication as one of the "interests of the United States beyond its borders." Amid these four ultima Thules of US American territory, as the entire run of this publication makes clear, we see an incredible variety of modes of US governmentality: states, commonwealths, districts, territories (incorporated and unincorporated, organized and unorganized), leases (perpetual, hundred-year, terminable only by mutual agreement), military bases and coaling stations, extraterritorial demarcations associated with diplomacy, US jurisdiction without US sovereignty, territory that lies paradoxically beyond borders, commercial claims to underwater lands, "territorial sea" that is legally beyond US boundaries, speculations on airspace, and entities of blurred or joint sovereignty owing to competing national claims. This list could go on, and it certainly has as we have moved past 1976, with the emergence of UNCLOS in 1982 and the EEZ, as well as the termination of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, which has been partially replaced with a new governmental mode of "free association" between the United States and the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau.

The scenes that come into view via this survey of *Boundaries of the United States and the Several States* should draw attention to commentary by Alyosha Goldstein in the introduction to *Formations of United States Colonialism*, wherein he reminds us that "the United States of America has never been a uniform or unequivocal geopolitical entity. . . . Rather, the United States encompasses a historically variable and uneven constellation of state and local governments, indigenous nations, unincorporated territories, free associated commonwealths, protectorates, federally administered public lands, military bases, export processing zones, *colonias*, and anomalies such as the District of Columbia."[58] Also turning his sights on this multifarious version of the United States, Paul Lai has played on the phrase *contiguous United States* to coin the term *discontiguous states of America*, framing the United States as a geopolitical entity whose "discontiguous" qualities permit only a "discontinuous logic of unity, one in which leaps of logic are necessary to create a semblance of wholeness."[59] Drawing on Lai's terminology to assess not only "the discontiguous American Empire" but also the ways in which studies of US American cultures have themselves become discontiguous in assessing imperial and other US discontiguities, Craig Santos Perez has looked toward archipelagic American studies, asserting that an "archipelagic turn offers a promising analytic to navigate the transnational, transatlantic, transpacific, transindigenous, and transhemispheric turns in the now discontiguous archipelago of American studies."[60] Bringing the US Geological Survey's "several states" and Lai's "discontiguous states" into the ambit of what Perez has referred to as an "archipelagic turn," the present study, as its subtitle suggests, limns a set of analytic categories that may aid us in assessing cultural formations that have arisen amid the *archipelagic states of America*, a phrase I use to refer to the archipelagic portions and aspects of the United States of America. This is a postcontinental redescription of the United States that asks vast and unintegrated ocean and island territories to speak from their points of disjunction and quandary, placing pressure as well on archipelagic spaces that have generally been seen as continental. Here the archipelagic as a framework does not promise to integrate these points or to make them anything other than discontiguous, and yet it does offer, as Perez suggests, a navigational heuristic, one that permits studied and dexterous movement among, to borrow from Cuban theorist Antonio Benítez-Rojo, their discontinuous conjunctions.[61] These are the conjunctions and discontiguities of the US borderwaters, realms where weird sovereignties and nonsovereignties range from those showcased in the Insular Cases to those infusing the seaborne plastic shards lodged in the digestive tracts of Laysan albatrosses.

Borderwaters: A Stone Skipped across the Sea

To this point in the introduction, the question of borders has been an initiating conceit and subsequently woven throughout discussions of the United States as an oceanic and archipelagic nation. The boundaries of the EEZ have given rise to the image and fact of a United States that claims more ocean space than it does land space, a United States that unexpectedly borders twenty-one other countries, a Glissantian United States that archipelagizes beyond the continental frontier and beyond its maritime borders with paradoxical claims to territory outside of its own borders. This is a United States whose shifting boundaries are recounted rhythmically by the US Geological Survey across several editions of *Boundaries of the United States and the Several States*. Certainly, in this light, and in light of the near-universal recognition and sense of utility the term *borderlands* has attained within analyses of US and broader American cultures since the 1990s, one might feel justified in suggesting that the archipelagic states of America constitute a borderland or a set of borderlands. For me, this question came to a head at the 2012 American Studies Association Convention, held in San Juan, Puerto Rico, where Stephens and I organized a session titled "Archipelagic American Studies" and where I attended a topically allied session titled "Islands of Resistance: Taiwanese American Studies in the Twenty-first Century." After island-oriented presentations by Philip Deloria, Rob Wilson, Birgit Däwes, and Hsinya Huang, the session commentator, Iping Liang of National Taiwan Normal University, gave excellent commentary in which she, in passing, described islands as "borderlands," joining other critics whose work has gravitated toward this same land-oriented critical framework to describe archipelagic and oceanic spaces.[62] During the audience comment period, I pointed out the terrestrial bias inherent in the term *borderlands* and wondered, advancing a term I had just begun using that year, what a *borderwaters* framework would look like in the context of the session's titular "Islands of Resistance."[63] Liang's reply at the moment was a rather cagey caution against essentializing geographic forms in ways that mark a distinction between terrestrial and watery surfaces. But since 2012 I have continued to wonder whether terrestrial metaphors such as border*lands* and cross*roads* do not already stack the epistemological deck against—if not fully essentialize—our grapplings with archipelagic spaces and vast swaths of the planet that are, in Patricia Yaeger's words, "not geo- but aquacentric."[64]

In making our way toward the aquacentric notion of the borderwaters, it is useful to note that, at least according to my reckoning, iterations of the border*lands* paradigm have run along three distinct but sometimes converging or intersecting terrestrial tracks. Within the arena of North American history, borderlands studies has existed for a century, with beginnings in the landmark 1921 study by Herbert E. Bolton, *The Spanish Borderlands: A Chronicle of Old Florida and the Southwest*, followed by Bolton's expansion of "borderland researches" as applicable to the history "of the entire Western Hemisphere," including such topics as the "relations of New England and the Maritime Provinces of Canada."[65] Within the field of American history at the end of the twentieth century, the term had come to describe "the contested boundaries between colonial domains," a model in which "inter-imperial struggle" proceeded developmentally and teleologically toward "international coexistence" and thus turned "borderlands into *bordered* lands."[66] Here, in narrating "tales of economic exchange, cultural mixing, and political contestation at the edges of empires, nations, and world systems," the "borderlands are places" where "master American narratives" tend to "come unraveled," even as, according to some historians, early twenty-first-century "Americanists [have] run the risk of loving borderlands to death" by turning everything into a borderland.[67] In enacting this love, American historians have, since the late 1980s, taken inspiration from a Chicana/o track of borderlands studies that has also existed quite separately as a field of its own, with basic assumptions that can stand in stark contrast to those of American historians. Whereas historians in the Bolton stream have seen a model in which the borderland arrives first and the border follows (i.e., wild borderlands are domesticated into *bordered* lands), Gloria Anzaldúa's influential book *Borderlands/La Frontera* (1987) advanced an inverted model in which the border, "a dividing line," arrives on the scene first, followed by an epiphenomenal "borderland," "a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary."[68] As Mary Pat Brady has noted, Anzaldúa's formulations were intentionally universalizing and have—analogous to American history's borderlands framework—been taken up widely in studies far beyond the US-Mexico border and its epiphenomenal borderlands, even as within Chicana/o studies (as John Alba Cutler observes), borders themselves have come unmoored from the territorial dividing line and have begun "emerging from multiple sites of racial, economic, and gendered contestation."[69] Concomitant with these moving borders, "the borderlands" of Chicana/o studies are "extending to places in the interior of the United States."[70]

A third track, like that of the American historians, also takes inspiration from Chicana/o borderlands studies. This body of work surrounds Walter D. Mignolo's decolonial border thinking/gnosis/epistemology, which "is a critical reflection on knowledge production from both the interior borders of the modern/colonial world system (imperial conflicts, hegemonic languages, directionality of translations, etc.) and its exterior borders (imperial conflicts with cultures being colonized, as well as the subsequent stages of independence or decolonization)."[71] Although it has the term *border* as its focal point, it does not often use the term *borderland* aside from its regular citations of Anzaldúa. Even so, it continues to see the border in landed terms, as depending on "massive appropriation of land accompanied by the constitution of international law that justified the massive appropriation of land."[72] And to date its thinking has been continentally driven to a large extent, as evidenced, for instance, in the preponderance of continent-based languages in Mignolo and Madina V. Tlostanova's list of languages that the "decolonial epistemic shift" might call upon: "Mandarin, Japanese, Russian, Hindi, Urdu, Aymara, Nahuatl, Wolof, Arabic, etc."[73] Aside from its nod to Japanese, this list either completely disregards languages with centers of gravity among what Du Bois called "the islands of the sea," or it compresses them into the term *etc*.[74] Still, even in its continentally minded and landed present, border thinking with its aspirations toward decoloniality, or its commitment to struggling "from and within modernity/coloniality's borders . . . to build a radically distinct world," is invested in what has been an archipelagic keyword, *relationality*, which Mignolo and Catherine E. Walsh take to mean the "ways that different local histories and embodied conceptions and practices . . . can enter into conversations and build understandings that . . . cross geopolitical locations and colonial differences."[75] Hence, it is unsurprising that, even as Mignolo has based his border gnosis primarily on the continental foundations of "the Chicano/a experience" and "African *gnosis*," he at one point permits himself the tangent of considering the Barbadian poet and theorist Edward Kamau Brathwaite's "search for a rhythm that would match his living experience in the Caribbean"—a rhythm, as Mignolo mentions, that Brathwaite found "when skipping a pebble on the ocean."[76] The tangential quality in Mignolo's work of this stone skipping on the ocean is perhaps where border thinking/epistemology/gnosis hits its limits—limits that border thinkers of this track have been aware of, given that this mode of border thinking is self-consciously not universal, self-admittedly unable to "account for all experiences and geo-historical violence and memories."[77]

Rather than being tangential to my own project, Brathwaite's image of a stone skipping on the ocean is a crucial component of what I am here describing as the borderwaters. This image found its way into the first stanza of Brathwaite's poem "Caribbean Theme: A Calypso" (1956), which imagines a stone skip as the genesis for the Caribbean archipelago:

> The stone had skidded, arc'd, and bloomed into islands
> Cuba and San Domingo
> Jamaica and Puerto Rico
> Grenada, Guadeloupe and St. Kitts
> Nevis, Barbados and Bonaire.
> Speed of the curving stone hissed into coral reefs
> White splash flashed into spray
> Wave teeth fanged into clay
> Bathsheba, Montego Bay.[78]

Here we see not a pebble skipping through the waves a few dozen feet offshore but a stone skimming across the entire Caribbean Sea, from the waters off North America to the waters off South America, and wherever it strikes, an island grows up out of the sea to mark the site where stone and water have met. Intriguingly, if we take the catalog of islands as our guide to the procession of stone strikes, the stone is not proceeding in a smooth arc but is zigzagging: it first hits Cuba and then skips east to San Domingo (Hispaniola) before zigging back west to hit Jamaica; it then sails over San Domingo to hit Puerto Rico, the easternmost of the Greater Antilles, before plummeting toward Grenada among the southernmost islands of the Lesser Antilles; it then zags back north, to the northernmost of the Lesser Antilles, hitting Guadeloupe before proceeding to St. Kitts and Nevis; finally, it skips back to the southern Lesser Antilles, hitting Barbados, and then, in a final long zag, it flies all the way west to Bonaire. In thinking through the unpredictable zigging and zagging of the stone, and in contemplating the mythic image conveyed in these lines of poetry, I find useful a term Brathwaite employs in the opening pages of his 1974 book *Contradictory Omens: Cultural Diversity and Integration in the Caribbean*. This book describes the Caribbean as a place of "inter-lapping," a relational state that in Brathwaite's specific commentary plots a Caribbean relationality to North America and Africa that is distinct from conventional *over*lapping.[79] Brathwaite does not elaborate on his definition of *interlapping*, but the term, when brought to bear on the erratic stone skip in "Caribbean Theme," seems to point toward an unpredictable cutting back and forth, as well as a type of mutual overlap or, better, of mutual palimpsest between earth and ocean, where earth (the stone) arrives from above and skips across the sea below, instigating an eruption of land, now arriving from below the sea, pushing through the sea to emerge as a set of islands that on a map seem to write over the ocean. But on the shore, the ocean again laps up onto the islands, while various components within the archipelagic ocean-island complex of the borderwaters reciprocally and cyclically inscribe and reinscribe themselves on each other. Brathwaite's skipping stone—an image of interlapping islands and waters—is evocative of Gilles Deleuze's commentary on certain islands as offering a "reminder that the sea is on top of the earth," while other islands remind us that "the earth is . . . under the sea, gathering its strength to punch through to the surface," with earth and sea "in constant strife."[80] Or, treating the same interlapping dynamic but without Deleuze's antagonistic imagery, Elizabeth Bishop offers a less assured version: "Land lies in water . . . / Or does the land lean down to lift the sea from under . . . ?"[81] Within the borderwaters, both sea and land are interlapping; to borrow from Brathwaite's description of Caribbean English, they are "submerged/emerging."[82] Meanwhile, borderwaters connections among the islands are also interlapping, excessive beyond a graceful arc and instead cutting back and forth in desultory, unforecasted motions among south and north, east and west.

This interlapping of land and water, of east and west, of north and south, has certain resonances with images conveyed by Anzaldúa and Glissant. *Borderlands/La Frontera* opens with Anzaldúa standing on the seashore, "at the edge where earth touches ocean / where the two overlap," imagining that "the sea cannot be fenced, / *el mar* does not stop at borders."[83] In turn, Anzaldúa's image of the ocean as something that does not love a fence seems to flow effortlessly into Glissant's allied image of the "unfenced archipelago of the world totality."[84] The unfenced archipelago and the unfenceable ocean constitute one vector, a decolonial vector, that we might find in the borderwaters—if not in the quiddity of the islands and waters themselves, then in certain cultural interactions with these forms and materialities, consistent with Philip Schwyzer's view of the "archipelagic perspective" as having its essence "in a willingness to challenge traditional boundaries."[85] And yet to envision islands and seas as somehow inherently conducing toward an annihilation of boundaries would be at odds with the human-archipelago interactions of the long twentieth century, during which oceanic borders have not been swallowed amid decolonial or transnational waves and spume but have proliferated in ways that indeed feel alien compared to traditional land borders, with stark implications for human individuals as well as larger human and non-human populations. This point was driven home to me during a conversation with the i-Kiribati American visual artist Fidalis Buehler, who told of growing up in American Samoa and going to help relatives who had been stranded at sea, nearly starving even though ships were passing them on a regular basis—it turned out these were non-US ships fishing in the United States' EEZ, with crews who feared that offering aid would draw attention to their unauthorized activities within an economic zone that was supposed to be exclusive to the United States.[86] Elsewhere, we might look at the mid-twentieth-century disagreement between New Zealand and the Philippines. This disagreement hinged on whether, when the US-Spanish Treaty of Paris drew a box around the Philippines in 1898, that box should be taken to mark the maritime borders of what would become the postcolonial Philippines or whether it should simply be taken to signify that the islands inside the box were considered Philippine territory (see fig. 1.7).[87]

We see another weird human-archipelago interaction in the US Immigration Act of 1917, also called the Asiatic Barred Zone Act, which drew a line in the ocean with the intention of excluding "natives of islands not possessed by the United States adjacent to the continent of Asia" (see fig. 1.8).[88] As one US senator explained of the boundary, "What we desired to avoid was the naming of all the little islands in the archipelago running along the Asiatic coast . . . , [hence choosing] merely to draw certain geographical lines and to say that none within those lines should come."[89] Also pertaining to maritime boundaries and immigration, it has been suggested that the United States' "wet feet, dry feet" policy, which from 1995 to 2017 permitted asylum only for Cuban immigrants who set foot on US soil, functioned to undercut the United States' own maritime claims regarding the sovereignty of its twelve-mile territorial sea (see fig. 1.9).[90] Today, furthermore, one can hardly look at the tension-ridden territorial

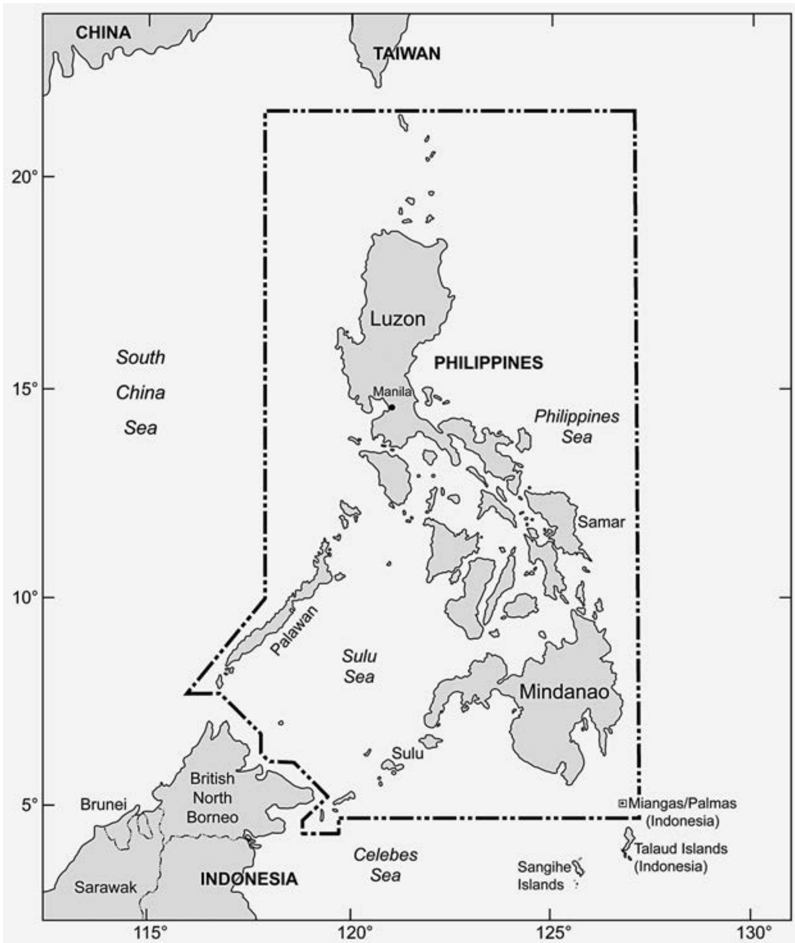


FIGURE 1.7 — The line around the Philippines as set in the 1898 Treaty of Paris and slightly revised in the run-up to the Philippines' assertion of the line as a border. The 1898 treaty stated, "Spain cedes to the United States the archipelago known as the Philippine Islands, and comprehending the islands lying within the . . . line" (quoted in United States Bureau of the Census, *Census of the Philippine Islands Taken Under the Direction of the Philippine Commission in the Year 1903*, vol. 1 [Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1905], 49). The treaty was careful not to specify the line as indicating a border within the water, but the Philippines reimagined the line as the border in innovating the new international category of the "archipelagic State," with borders in the water. From John G. Butcher and R. E. Elson, *Sovereignty and the Sea: How Indonesia Became an Archipelagic State* (Singapore: National University of Singapore Press, 2017), 53. Courtesy of National University of Singapore Press.

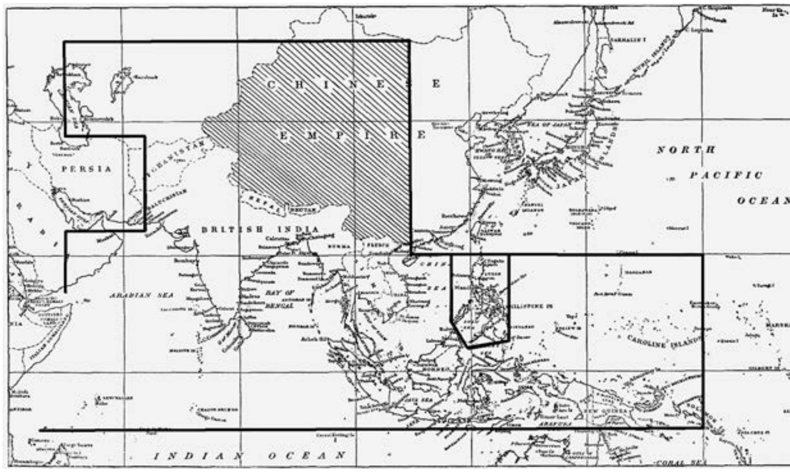


FIGURE I.8 — Asiatic barred zone. This map was originally published with the following caption: "MAP SHOWING ASIATIC ZONE PRESCRIBED IN SECTION THREE OF IMMIGRATION ACT, THE NATIVES OF WHICH ARE EXCLUDED FROM THE UNITED STATES, WITH CERTAIN EXCEPTIONS. (Section indicated by diagonal lines covered by treaty and laws relating to Chinese. The Philippine Islands are United States possessions and therefore not included in the barred zone.)" Drawn by the US government across vast swaths of land and ocean, the Asiatic Barred Zone Act's line was not a border that marked territorial holdings, but it functioned as a border to the extent that it became the boundary that determined who could enter the United States and who was barred. Line is enhanced for ease of viewing. From US Department of Labor, Bureau of Immigration, *Immigration Laws (Act of February 5, 1917): Rules of May 1, 1917* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1917), map inserted between pages 32 and 33.

claims made in the South China Sea and suggest that there is something inherent in the ocean that does not love a border (see fig. I.10).[91] And, peering into the future, two US national security experts have written a novel titled *Ghost Fleet: A Novel of the Next World War* (2015), which looks to the coming decades and imagines World War III having its initial stirrings at the bottom of the Mariana Trench, inside the United States' Marianas Trench Marine National Monument, as state-sponsored Chinese scientists search for natural gas deposits in ocean space that is inside the US EEZ and therefore considered international waters for scientific purposes but US territory for purposes of fishing and mineral extraction.[92]

Unlike the inverted border/borderlands models in the fields of American history and Chicana/o studies, the watery borders and borderwaters interlap—that is, one is not neatly epiphenomenal to the other, but

FIGURE 1.9 — Would-be immigrants from Cuba attempting to enter the United States by crossing the Florida Straits on an old Chevy truck attached to oil barrels, July 17, 2003. According to the "wet feet, dry feet" policy, such travelers would be eligible for asylum if they reached US soil, but if the Coast Guard found them while they were in US territorial waters or the US EEZ, they would be returned to Cuba. This particular group was intercepted within forty miles of the US coast and sent back to Cuba. Later Luis Grass, who in 2003 had repurposed the truck as a vehicle for water travel, crossed into the United States by land with his family in 2005. See "Truck-Sailing Cubans Finally Reach U.S.," *NBC News*, March 22, 2005, http://www.nbcnews.com/id/7267457/ns/us_news/t/truck-sailing-cubans-finally-reach-us/#.XXfuHihKiUk. Photograph by US Coast Guard fireman Greg Ewald. From Defense Visual Information Distribution Service, https://www.dvidshub.net/image/1077912/cuban-migrants. The appearance of US Department of Defense (DoD) visual information does not imply or constitute DoD endorsement.

rather they cut back and forth, zigging and zagging, mutually writing and rewriting, like islands on a map seeming to sit on top of the water while the water laps back up onto the islands. In this way, compared to their land-based counterparts, watery borders and borderwaters are weird, with their weirdness showcased in the suite of confounding borders already mentioned. The treaty-negotiated boundary around the Philippines might not be a border but rather evoke thousands of island-circumscribing borders that are nature-fixed and nature-fluxed by the shorelines of thousands of Philippine islands. The United States might claim a sea-based border

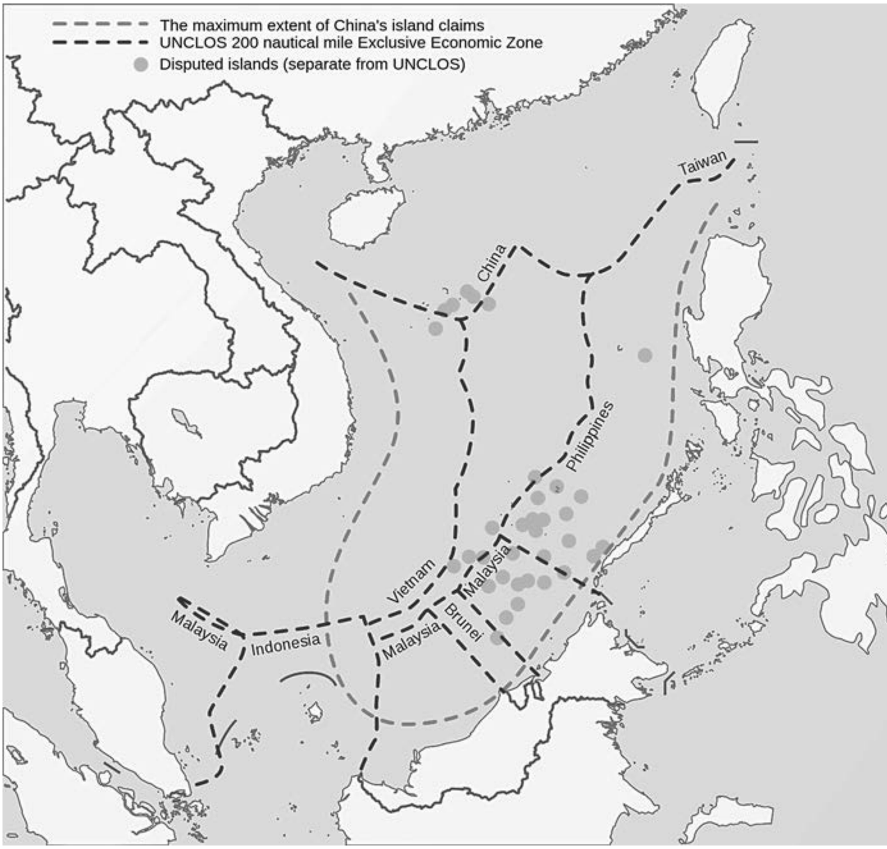


FIGURE 1.10 — The tangle of borders in the South China Sea. The lines with country labels represent the EEZ-based territorial claims of China, Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei, and the Philippines. The curved line that swoops from around China's EEZ line throughout the South China Sea shows what is known as China's "nine-dash line," representing a Chinese claim to sea territory that emerged in the wake of World War II. China's nine-dash line conflicts with the claims of every nation with an EEZ in the South China Sea. Magnifying territorial tensions in the region, the United States, in an effort to reaffirm its stance that the nine-dash line is illegitimate and that other nations' EEZs are not off-limits to military ships, maintains an active military presence in the South China Sea. Map by Goran tek-en, 2014, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:South_China_Sea_vector.svg.

for its territorial sea that is based on its own moving shorelines, asserting sovereignty over a twelve-mile band of ocean, but for over two decades it might also deny its own oceanic sovereignty by requiring Cuban refugees to set foot upon the shoreline from which the watery border is projected. The United States might draw a line through the Pacific and into the Indian Ocean, and that line might function as a border for immigration purposes but not for territorial purposes. Meanwhile, the EEZ, as the swath of waters that reach out two hundred miles from a shoreline, functions much like the territorial sea border to the degree that it involves the seaward projection of a shifting shoreline, but at the same time it functions like the 1898 box around the Philippines, like a border in some respects but in others simply a line representing the idea that animals, vegetables, and minerals inside the line are the territory of the United States. Now a school of one hundred tuna might be said to constitute a set of one hundred swimming tuna-shaped US borders just so long as the school remains inside the EEZ. Otherwise, the EEZ is international waters, free for the vessels of other nations to enter for peaceful and nonextractive purposes. And yet strangely these are *international* waters in which the United States (because of its right to protect the marine environment of its EEZ) has created several massive *national* monuments, such as the Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument, the Marianas Trench Marine National Monument, the Rose Atoll Marine National Monument, and the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument (see fig. I.11). Compounding the alien quality of these watery borders: because the United States claims the right to operate military ships in the EEZs of other countries (believing that "military activities are" not "inherently non-peaceful"), it must therefore also tolerate other countries when they have indirect military interests inside US marine national monuments.[93]

In some places the aquatic border becomes a function of moving shorelines. Elsewhere, it melds with the skin of living tuna or the entrails of Laysan albatrosses, and foreign trespasses against these borders might involve a hook in the mouth of a fish or a shard of plastic, carried by a current from thousands of miles away, lodged in the digestive tract of an albatross. In this way, we might say, the borderwaters complex becomes an instantiation of what Bruno Latour has referred to as "nature-culture," a "seamless fabric" that interweaves that which is "*real, like nature*" with that which is "*narrated, like discourse*."[94] Hence, unlike Chicana/o borderlands scholarship as crystallized by Anzaldúa, the project of *Borderwaters* is not to map humans' presumably *natural* "emotional residue" in response to

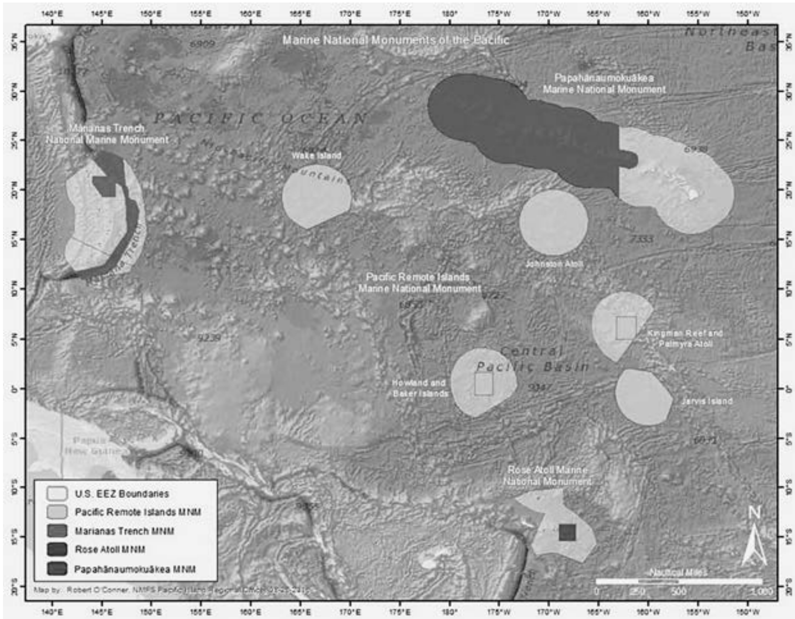


FIGURE I.11 — Some of the United States' island-based EEZ boundaries in the Pacific, together with the boundaries of US marine national monuments, which are sometimes coterminous with the EEZ and sometimes smaller. The Marianas Trench Marine National Monument is the westernmost monument on the map. From "Marine National Monuments in the Pacific," NOAA Fisheries, accessed August 24, 2020, https://www.fpir.noaa.gov/MNM/mnm_index.html.

the imposition of an "unnatural boundary."[95] Rather, like a stone skipping across a sea and evoking an archipelago, *Borderwaters* seeks to cut back and forth, to hit upon sites of US American interlapping between earth and ocean, surface and depth, nature and culture—to trace a set of archipelagic prehistories of the United States' emergence as a majority-ocean nation, a status that as yet seems more natural (residing in the nonhuman terraqueous materiality that the US government claims) than cultural (residing in a living set of cultural mythologies regarding the state's claims to those materialities). But in *Borderwaters* the United States' terraqueous prehistories assertively punch, as if charging up from the seafloor, into its archipelagic present. And at other times, less in the mode of Deleuze's description and more in the mode of Bishop's, the present shorelines lean down into the water to lift the prehistories up from under. In the context of a borderwaters framework, a reference to the "interior" of the United

States might be less likely to speak to places like Iowa or Missouri and more likely to speak to the waters that exist between the ocean surface and the ocean floor. And yet even as *Borderwaters* is a project addressing the archipelagic states of America, it participates in a planetary project of decontinentalization, one that operates simultaneously at the level of how we know what we know about the surfaces and depths of the planet, and at the level of how we permit the ontologies of the planet's terraqueous features to participate in structuring how we act.

Something That Can't Be Found by Covering More Ground

Recently, Leslie Elizabeth Eckel asked an important and clarifying question regarding the project of archipelagic American studies, wondering whether scholars who have written in this vein "rely on the type of nation-centered model that they intend to unsettle."[96] This question is urgent in the wake of nearly three decades of what has usually been called *transnational American studies*. As is clear to any of us who have participated in it, this latter mode of American studies has seen much hand-wringing, as scholars have wondered if the field's new transnationalism has only been an academic superstructure built on global neoliberalism's economic base, or as scholars have inevitably come up short as they have approached what still seems to be the definitionally impossible task of writing in the field of American studies without engaging the United States in some way.[97] Above all, transnational Americanists have wondered—and Eckel's question regarding archipelagic American studies' apparent US-centered analyses is a variation on this theme—"Are we being transnational yet?"[98] I see *Borderwaters* and much of archipelagic American studies as emerging from the wake, rather than the midst, of transnational American studies, at a place where such questions have hit a point of exhaustion. Some transnational Americanists may indeed see *Borderwaters* as US-centric. This is unavoidable, and in substantial ways accurate, because the book is fundamentally concerned with the United States of a long twentieth century and with the natural-cultural prehistories of the country's emergence as an ocean nation. It is, furthermore, interested in taking seriously—though definitely not endorsing—the implications of the United States' present and historical claims to archipelagic territory. This is a project that exists in dark waters—waters where President Trump could not go because continental exceptionalism's anti-insularity did not permit him to see the

US imperial archipelago as US American, and waters where some postcolonial and decolonial scholars have been less likely to go because they also, like Trump but with antithetical rationales, would prefer *not* to see the US imperial archipelago as US American.[99] No doubt, in tracing these prehistories, the study must zigzag from the Mississippi River to the Cook Islands, from Florida to Haiti, from Indonesia to the US Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, from Utah's Sevier Desert to the Cambrian ocean that half a billion years ago submerged what would become the Sevier Desert, and from the US Virgin Islands to Guam and the Great Pacific Garbage Patch. Along the way it must draw on English, Indonesian, French, Spanish, and Japanese. One could say, then, that transnationalism weaves itself throughout *Borderwaters*. But the purpose of *Borderwaters* is certainly not to *be* transnational. It is to turn the narrative of the United States of America inside out, and in this way it moves away from *striving against a US-centric view* and toward *striving for a US-eccentric vision* of the United States as an archipelagic and oceanic nation-state with interlapping natural-cultural lives that are also archipelagic and oceanic.

As a US-eccentric study, *Borderwaters* finds kin in the interlinked novels *The Oddfits* (2016) and *The More Known World* (2017), part of the Oddfits series by Tiffany Tsao, a US-born novelist who spent her formative years in Singapore and Indonesia and now lives in Australia.[100] In the Oddfits series, the island of Singapore becomes present-day readers' point of entry to a nether-dimensional version of the planet Earth that was originally settled by a group of Pacific Islanders who centuries ago, during an oceanic expedition, accidentally slipped into this other dimension (which is called "the More Known World") and found themselves on an island in a lake.[101] Within the novels, the present-day project of cataloging the More Known World is headed by a woman hailing from the Maluku Islands, the present-day Indonesian islands that were the fabled Spice Islands that Christopher Columbus was looking for when he encountered the Caribbean.[102] Amid this massive cataloging effort, there is a phrase that circulates vaguely among a few characters—it is aspirational and subversive to the project of cataloging: "Something that can't be found by covering more ground."[103] In its drive against cataloging, the phrase resonates with Walcott's musing on "the arrogance of an Old World botanist" giving a name to "an unknown plant" and Walcott's belief that his own "ignorance is more correct than [the botanist's] knowledge."[104] Resembling the anticataloging impulse that circulates in Tsao's novels, the chapters in *Borderwaters* are not a catalog or set of representative case studies—not a set of explorations conducted to create a grid-facilitated map of the US borderwaters according to intersecting latitudinal and longitudinal lines. *Borderwaters* finds kin in Tsao's aspirational phrase for still other reasons. If continental and multicontinental approaches to US and broader planetary cultures are seeking something by covering more ground (not a single continent but two, three, four, five, etc.), then *Borderwaters* seeks something that can't be found by covering more ground. When it walks the quasi-ground of the shoreline, it walks fractally, walking the same beach in multitudinous ways (like a human, like a mouse, like an ant, like a mollusk)—ways that become nether-dimensional according to how continentally minded humans typically apprehend space and place. Further, it seeks wet, aquacentric modes of knowing and being that are not beholden to the geocentric notion that the *ground* is the necessary epistemological or ontological foundation. Submergence in water and the churnings of shorelines become foundational. The chapters might be considered a series of waves in which archipelagic thought and archipelagic materiality are tumbling, knocking against each other, even as they churn up and churn with US-centric and US-eccentric self-perceptions and cultural forms.

Chapter 1 directs readers toward archipelagic churnings in the interdisciplinary field of American studies, which during the mid-twentieth century afforded academic and broader popular thought with widely influential and iconic images of the continental United States as a virgin land, a garden inhabited by a machine-building American Adam, a manifest destiny spanned and fulfilled by a sublime transcontinental road. In juxtaposition with this backdrop, the chapter, titled "Interlapping Continents and Archipelagoes of American Studies," begins by discussing two archipelagic moments of the early twenty-first century: a heightened interest in archipelagic spaces and archipelagoes per se among Americanist scholars and the relocation of *American Quarterly* (the flagship journal of the American Studies Association) to the University of Hawaiʻi. The chapter speaks to both an emergent set of archipelagic Americanists and a traditional set of continentally trained Americanists, seeking to trace a heretofore unexamined archipelagic backdrop of twentieth-century Americanist continentalism, while reciprocally advancing projections on where the continent might fit within a self-consciously archipelagic American studies of the twenty-first century. In tracing these conceptual questions, I place pressure on specific scenes from Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884) and from the lesser known Cook Islands writer

Florence "Johnny" Frisbie's memoir, *Miss Ulysses from Puka-Puka: The Autobiography of a South Sea Trader's Daughter* (1948). My readings of specific scenes from these two books showcase heuristics for understanding, retrospectively, the place of the archipelago within twentieth-century Americanist continentalism and, prospectively, potential positionalities of the continent within twenty-first-century approaches to the archipelagic states of America. These retrospective and prospective continental-archipelagic relationalities find theorization via the notion of *interlapping*, and the chapter concludes with a discussion, based on my 2014 conversations with Frisbie, of US America's simultaneously variegated and ontologically flat geographic expanse.

Building on this first chapter's work on archipelagic thought in space and time (continent and archipelago, retrospect and prospect), the ensuing four chapters bring further focus to archipelagic thinking vis-à-vis spatial and temporal categories. Although space and time cannot be peeled apart or otherwise disentangled from one another, chapters 2 and 3 of this study are more oriented toward archipelagic thinking's upshots for spatial engagement, while chapters 4 and 5 are more oriented toward archipelagic thinking and its implications for temporal engagement. Even so, across the chapters, the spatial and temporal categories are copresent and mutually contingent, with shifts in focus being matters of degree and proportion rather than bracketing either space or time. These general shifts in spatial and temporal focus permit *Borderwaters* to underscore archipelagic thinking's material implications, ranging from viewing human-Earth relations by means of the category of form, to accessing multiple modes of practical thinking regarding borders in relation to oceanic and terraqueous space, to understanding citizenship and vulnerability in relation to deep geologic pasts measured by floods and periods of drying, to striving toward new modes of life and being by contemplating the archipelagic states of America in relation to near-term and inconceivably long-term futures.

Leaning toward the spatial dimension, chapter 2, titled "Archipelagic Diaspora and Geographic Form," marks a distinction between standard culturally materialist and newer formally materialist approaches to geography within the study of US American culture. The distinction is crucial because, as the previous chapter illustrates, culturally materialist approaches to geography are not lacking in formalist components—rather, they are less cognizant of their geographically formal investments and, consequently, tend to acquiesce to a traditional continentalist status quo even when that status quo runs contrary to their cultural and political commitments. The chapter juxtaposes this tendency with a geoformally attentive approach to Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937), a novel that engages in a project of theorizing the geographic form and spatial materiality of the vast archipelago that W. E. B. Du Bois, in his description of the planetary color line, referred to as "the islands of the sea."[105] The insular spaces on which the novel relies include Key West, Palm Beach, the Caribbean, Hellas, Indonesia, and others. Each of these spaces exerts parallax influence on *Their Eyes*' evocation of the horizon space that Janie, the novel's protagonist, uses to animate her travels in the context of the 1928 hurricane-induced breach of the dam containing Florida's massive Lake Okeechobee. The hurricane sets Janie amid a flood in which continents and islands are, quite literally, moving. This attentiveness to Hurston's varied reliances on insular and archipelagic spatial forms helps make accessible Hurston's investments in critiquing and ironizing the fundamental geographic claims of US sovereignty. Ultimately, the chapter argues that the form of the archipelago offers a window into a new geographic formalism—complementing studies that rely on cultural geography—that lends pivotal modes of legibility to cultural texts as well as to reading practices.

Chapter 3, titled "Borderwaters and Geometries of Being Amid," furthers the book's spatial tack, offering an elaboration on the general discussion and definition of the term *borderwaters* that appears in this study's introduction. Generally speaking, the border/borderlands complex has evinced a spatial imagination in which the border is an unnatural and Euclidean line attended by an epiphenomenal borderland characterized by an organic set of contestations that direct their energies against the state's superimposed Euclidean geometry/geography. In contradistinction to this model, chapter 3 links a salient aspect of the borderwaters to governments and broader human cultures' engagement in and with modes of *non*-Euclidean spatial perception, in which the spatial imagination of boundaries has been a partial function of the aqueous and terraqueous materialities to which governmentality has tended to affix marine borders. As human imaginations have innovated aqueous and terraqueous notions of the border by burrowing into and engaging with arenas of nature that are better described in terms of non-Euclidean geometries (such as fractal and Indigenous geometries), watery borders and their attendant borderwaters have become places where humans interact with other humans on terms set by nonhuman and non-Euclidean spatial models. In making these arguments, I turn toward the archipelagic and oceanic work of the Greater Mexican visual artist Miguel Covarrubias, whose midcentury visual and written formulations—of Indonesia, of the United States' Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, and of Indigenous Caribbean populations—help contextualize and theorize state, Indigenous, and nonhuman cultures as they have converged and diverged across non-Euclidean modes of imagining boundaries, nonboundaries, and spatial area on a terraqueous planet. The chapter is interested in Covarrubias's work per se but is equally interested in the geometric vistas with which his work intersects. Geometric questions may feel abstruse to some in the humanities, but as the chapter emphasizes, questions of geometry have stark implications for how we think of the meaning of boundaries, the existence of US territory, potential solidarities between transarchipelagic populations, and the terrifying ramifications of nuclear testing in the United States' interlapping southwestern borderlands and southwestern borderwaters.

Chapter 4 builds on the spatially fractal qualities of the borderwaters to move the form of the archipelago—and the project of archipelagic thinking—into fractal temporalities that link human and geologic timescales, with the question of time functioning to push the borderwaters frame into what would normally be considered a landlocked portion of the North American continent. Titled "Fractal Temporality on Vulnerable Foreshores," this chapter orients itself around the notion of the *foreshore*, a term that typically describes the portion of the shore between the tide's high- and low-water marks. But here *foreshore* is generalized to describe space that exists between *any* two high- and low-water marks, evoking the apprehension of a temporally fractal procession of foreshores, ranging from those produced by the blip-like ripple of a millisecond all the way to those created by inundations and desiccations associated with shifts in climate and plate tectonics that are measured in hundreds of millions or even billions of years. With this understanding of the fractal temporality of the foreshore, the chapter examines the illuminating archipelagic theorizing that took place at the Topaz internment camp (officially the Central Utah Relocation Center), which the United States built during World War II in Utah's Sevier Desert as an unconstitutional prison for people of Japanese descent, whether they were US citizens or noncitizens. As the prisoners well understood, they were living on the bed of an ancient and very large lake that had dried up about ten thousand years previously, at the end of the most recent ice age. Looking back much further in time, they also understood that they were living on the floor of the Cambrian ocean of some half-billion years ago. Engaging in beachcombing tens of thousands and even hundreds of millions of years after the fact, the prisoners at Topaz collected mollusk shells from the lake and fossils from the ocean, creating art—ranging from shell brooches to stonework to poetry—that incorporated these lithic items as a mode of theorizing human situatedness within geologic periods that are fractal in their inundations and desiccations. The prisoners' archipelagic theorizings—particularly as they pertain to human meaning in geologic time—showcase the urgency of the borderwaters to thinking through human ethics and agency, as the prisoners' aesthetic works unspooled questions of human suffering at the hands of an unjust government in relation to the aeonic sociality of stones and shells on geotemporal foreshores.

A fifth and final chapter, titled "Spiraling Futures of the Archipelagic States of America," moves away from chapter 4's retrospective orientation toward deep times of the past and instead plots archipelagic thought in a prospective frame, in reference to the temporalities—deep and shallow—of multiple futures, ranging from the US Virgin Islands' perhaps unexpected relation to the heat death of the universe in the exotically distant future, to the Anthropocene's examination by posthuman Black oceanographers of perhaps a hundred thousand years hence, to spacefaring humans of perhaps a century from now who descend from seafaring earthlings. Against the legacies of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's nineteenth-century view of past and future history as requiring the continent as its fundamental stage, this chapter seeks methods of decontinentalizing the future, reading archipelagic futures against the continental grain. In so doing, it leans on Robert Smithson's earth- and waterwork *Spiral Jetty* (1970) together with future-oriented archipelagic theorizing of the Caribbean and the Pacific, locating future archives of the borderwaters in cosmology's predicted fluctuations in entropy, albatross-curated collections of seaborne plastic, and asteroids near Mars. Along the way, the genre of the *short* story becomes a paradoxical form through which *long* futures are thought, ranging from US Virgin Islands writer Tiphanie Yanique's "The Bridge Stories" (2005), to British writer A. S. Byatt's "Sea Story" (2013), to Filipino writer Timothy James M. Dimacali's "Sky Gypsies" (2007). Within this archipelago of stories, metonymic of a future of mind-bogglingly numerous US American and post–US American stories, the archipelagic states of America fade in and out of existence, meeting their temporal borders across prospective and fractal times.

A conclusion, "Distant Reading the Archipelagic Gyre: Digital Humanities Archipelagoes," reflects on convergences between the digital humanities and archipelagic thought in terms of distant and close reading. Here, for instance, Moretti's use of the geographic form of the archipelago to theorize distant reading interfaces with Glissant's direct address to a "distant reader" as he contemplates commensurabilities and incommensurabilities between the fractal granularities of a single island and the unfenced totality of the world archipelago. With these convergences in mind, I closely read the data produced by the computer-facilitated distant reading of the entire runs of three Americanist journals: *American Quarterly*, *American Literature*, and *Journal of American History*. Focused on a set of archipelagic keywords (*island*, *archipelago*, *ocean*, *sea*, *continent*, *mainland*, and *transnational*), this melding of close and distant reading draws on the work of the preceding chapters, commenting on *Borderwaters*' place within Americanist scholarship and wider work in archipelagic thought. Rather than calling for an archipelagic turn in Americanist thought or suggesting there has been such a turn, the conclusion emphasizes the urgency that Americanists engage with an archipelagic gyre, or a set of island- and ocean-oriented philosophical currents that have neither descended from nor depended on the United States for their genesis and vitality.

NOTES

Introduction

A small portion of the material in the introduction is drawn from my essay "What Is an Archipelago? On Bandung Praxis, Lingua Franca, and Archipelagic Interlapping," in *Contemporary Archipelagic Thinking: Towards New Comparative Methodologies and Disciplinary Formations*, edited by Yolanda Martínez-San Miguel and Michelle Stephens (2020), and I thank Rowman and Littlefield for permission to republish this adapted material.

1 Rafi Segal and Yonatan Cohen, "Territorial Map of the World," *openDemocracy: Free Thinking for the World*, October 7, 2013, https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/territorial-map-of-world/. More specifically, the two hundred nautical miles of the EEZ are measured "from the baselines from which the breadth of the territorial sea is measured," which itself extends twelve miles out from the shoreline. United Nations, *Law of the Sea*, 18, 3.

2 On the Caribbean as the third US border, see "Fact Sheet: Caribbean Third Border Initiative," The White House: President George W. Bush, April 21, 2001, https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/04/20010423-5.html; and Bridget Johnson, "U.S. Vows Greater Maritime Security Collaboration in Jamaica, Colombia Meetings," *Homeland Security Today*, February 9, 2018, https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/maritime-security/greater-maritime-security-collaboration-jamaica-colombia/.

3 "Maritime Zones and Boundaries," NOAA Office of General Counsel, accessed August 24, 2020, https://www.gc.noaa.gov/gcil_maritime.html.

4 On NOAA's "Maritime Zones and Boundaries" page, this map is hyperlinked from text that reads "Map of the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone." The United States has not signed UNCLOS, but President Ronald Reagan adopted UNCLOS's definition of the EEZ by presidential proclamation in 1983. Dautel, "Transoceanic Trash," 191–92.

5 "The United States Is an Ocean Nation," NOAA Office of General Counsel, accessed August 24, 2020, https://www.gc.noaa.gov/documents/2011/012711_gcil_maritime_eez_map.pdf. As of August 2020, Wikipedia's article "Exclusive Economic Zone" lists the United States as having the largest EEZ in the world, at 11,351,000 square kilometers, with France listed as having the second largest, at 10,700,000 square kilometers. Wikipedia, s.v. "Exclusive Economic Zone," last modified August 24, 2020, 21:04 (UTC), https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Exclusive_economic_zone.

6 In recognition that the United States of America is not the only American nation-state, and because this study discusses American cultures and events affiliated with both the United States and the broader Americas, *Borderwaters* does not use the unadorned term *America* to refer to the United States, nor does it use the term *American* to refer to US citizens or nationals. Rather, when referring to the United States, I use *United States of America*, *United States*, *US*, and *US America*. In referring to the United States adjectivally, I use *US* or *US American*. The latter term may also refer to US citizens or nationals. I make exceptions to these rules. Of course, quotations remain unchanged, and I refer to academic fields according to their own standard self-reference: *American studies*, *American literary studies*, and *American history*. Although these fields are US focused, they often address cultures, events, and literatures produced before the United States came into existence, and while it would be convenient to simply change *American history* to *US history*, the latter term would be proleptic in reference to the pre-US but nonetheless American cultures that these fields address. Further, I follow standard practice in referring to scholars in these fields as *Americanists*; the term *US Americanist* would run the risk of suggesting my reference is to US-based scholars, while the fields of course involve vibrant contributions from non-US scholars. In referring to US ethnicities and places, I use standard terms such as *African American*, *Japanese American*, *Native American*, *Euro-American*, and *American Samoa*. On a few occasions, I echo other scholars or speakers in their use of the terms *America* or *American* when the repetition is clear. The phrase *archipelagic states of America* is an echo of *United States of America*, and it has a US referent, while *the archipelagic Americas* refers to archipelagic spaces in the broader Americas.

7 Matthew Klint, "All the Patriotic Quotes in Your U.S. Passport," *Live and Let's Fly* (blog), July 4, 2018, https://liveandletsfly.com/us-passport-quotes/.

8 I draw the term *seagoing manifest destiny* from Drinnon, *Facing West*, 129.

9 Roosevelt, *Strenuous Life*, 1. I borrow the term *imperial archipelago* from Thompson, *Imperial Archipelago*.

10 Roosevelt, *Strenuous Life*, 6–7.

11 Roosevelt, *Strenuous Life*, 9; and Roosevelt, *Foes of Our Own Household*, 63.

12 Minow, "Enduring Burdens," vii, viii.

13 Craig Santos Perez, "Guam, Where America's Voting Rights End," *Craig Santos Perez* (blog), August 9, 2017, https://craigsantosperez.wordpress.com/2017/08/09/guam-where-americas-voting-rights-end/.

14 "Birtherism," Trump Twitter Archive, accessed August 24, 2020, http://www.trumptwitterarchive.com/highlights/birtherism.

15 Quoted in Charlie Savage, "Jeff Sessions Dismisses Hawaii as 'an Island in the Pacific,'" *New York Times*, April 20, 2017, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/20/us/politics/jeff-sessions-judge-hawaii-pacific-island.html.

16 Trump is quoted in Brandon Carter, "Trump Slams Puerto Rico: 'They Want Everything to Be Done for Them,'" *Hill*, September 30, 2017, https://thehill.com/homenews/administration/353216-trump-criticizes-san-juan-mayors-poor-leadership-during

-puerto-rico; Jordan Fabian, "Trump Says Puerto Rico Relief Hampered by 'Big Water, Ocean Water,'" *Hill*, September 29, 2017, https://thehill.com/homenews/administration/353094-trump-says-puerto-rico-relief-hampered-by-big-water-ocean-water; and Philip Bump, "The 'Very Big Ocean' between Here and Puerto Rico Is Not a Perfect Excuse for a Lack of Aid," *Washington Post*, September 26, 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/politics/wp/2017/09/26/the-very-big-ocean-between-here-and-puerto-rico-is-not-a-perfect-excuse-for-a-lack-of-aid/?utm_term=.f5a8e02162df.

17 Fabiola Santiago, "Trump Didn't Do a 'Fantastic Job' in Puerto Rico. Ask the Loved Ones of the 2,975 Dead," *Miami Herald*, September 1, 2018, https://www.miamiherald.com/news/local/news-columns-blogs/fabiola-santiago/article217587305.html.

18 Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 180.

19 L. Lowe, *Immigrant Acts*, 28.

20 Paine, *Common Sense*, 93.

21 Mignolo and Walsh, *On Decoloniality*, 5.

22 On US demographic trends and white fears, see Dudley L. Poston Jr. and Rogelio Sáenz, "U.S. Whites Will Soon Be the Minority in Number, but Not Power," *Baltimore Sun*, August 8, 2017, http://www.baltimoresun.com/news/opinion/oped/bs-ed-op-0809-minority-majority-20170808-story.html.

23 Roberts and Stephens, "Archipelagic American Studies: Decontinentalizing," 1–4, 11.

24 Bulosan, *America Is in the Heart*, 246.

25 Roberts and Stephens, "Archipelagic American Studies: Decontinentalizing," 1.

26 These particular rhymes are words of my own choosing, based on the entries and pronunciation guidelines for "archipelagic" in the *Oxford English Dictionary* and *Merriam-Webster*. *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v, "archipelagic," online ed., accessed August 14, 2020, https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/10386?redirectedFrom=archipelagic#eid; *Merriam-Webster*, "archipelagic," online ed., accessed August 14, 2020, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/archipelagic.

27 *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed. (1989), s.v. "archipelago"; and *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "archipelago," online ed., accessed August 14, 2020, https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/10387?redirectedFrom=archipelago#eid.

28 *Oxford English Dictionary*, 1st ed. (1933), s.v. "archipelago"; and *A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles*, vol. 1 (1888), s.v. "archipelago."

29 Benjamin, *Illuminations*, 257–58.

30 Handley, *New World Poetics*, 42.

31 Glissant, *Introduction à une Poétique du Divers*, 45. On translation, islands, and archipelagoes, see Gabrakova, *Unnamable Archipelago*, 137–52.

32 Walcott, "Isla Incognita," 52.

33 *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "Melanesian," online ed., accessed August 14, 2020, https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/116014?redirectedFrom=melanesian#eid.

34 McDougall, "'We Are Not American,'" 261.

35 For useful perspective on coral as analogous to humans in creating land, see Byrnes, "The Infrastructure of Coral," 32. Also on coral, see Helmreich, *Sounding the Limits of Life*, 48–61.
36 See Roberts, "What Is an Archipelago?," 95, 97.
37 Quintero Herencia, *La hoja de mar*, 25.
38 Wiedorn, *Think Like an Archipelago*, 125.
39 Glissant, "Europe and the Antilles, 256–57.
40 Glissant, *Introduction à une Poétique du Divers*, 44.
41 Along these lines, in discussing the archipelagization of Europe, Glissant looks to France and lists some of the "many islands taking shape": "the Basque country, Catalonia, Brittany, Corsica, Alsace," each of which has significant ties or interisland relations with non-French regions or cultural islands. Glissant, "Europe and the Antilles," 256.
42 Whitman, *Leaves of Grass*, 532.
43 Noudelmann, "Literature," 207.
44 United Nations, *Law of the Sea*, 39.
45 Eldredge, *Life Pulse*, 56.
46 See Moretti, *Distant Reading*.
47 Dimock, "Low Epic," 623.
48 I use the terms *archipelagic thinking* and *archipelagic thought* interchangeably throughout this study, and I see archipelagic thought/thinking as something that has emerged with different genealogies from multiple archipelagoes. See Pugh, "Island Movements."
49 For the full series of this publication, see the bibliography entries for Henry Gannett (1885, 1900, 1904), Edward M. Douglas (1923, 1930), and Franklin K. van Zandt (1966 and 1976).
50 Gannett, *Boundaries of the United States* (1885), 7.
51 Gannett, *Boundaries of the United States* (1900), 5.
52 Gannett, *Boundaries of the United States* (1904), 3.
53 Douglas, *Boundaries, Areas, Geographic Centers* (1923), iii.
54 Douglas, *Boundaries, Areas, Geographic Centers* (1930), iii.
55 Van Zandt, *Boundaries of the United States and the Several States* (1966), vii.
56 Of course, the Aleutian Islands are part of Alaska, and these initial continental claims also involved islands near the continental coasts.
57 Van Zandt, *Boundaries of the United States* (1976), 23.
58 Goldstein, "Introduction," 1.
59 Lai, "Discontiguous States of America," 3.
60 Perez, "Transterritorial Currents," 619.
61 Benítez-Rojo, *Repeating Island*, 2.
62 I greatly admire this work, even as it makes recourse to a borderlands framework in approaching terraqueous spaces: on the "American Pacific" and the borderlands, see Wilson, *Reimagining the American Pacific*, 2, 7, 38, 282–83; on Puerto Rico as a "borderland state," see Ramón E. Soto-Crespo, *Mainland Passage*, 2; on the US South as a

borderland between the US North and the Caribbean, see Guterl, *American Mediterranean*, 11; for the phrase "watery borderlands," see Allison, "Beyond It All," 6; for the phrase "littoral borderlands," see Igler, *Great Ocean*, 184; on the Strait of Gibraltar as a borderland characterized by the ocean's depths, see S. Pack, *Deepest Border*; on "the borderlands of early America" as characterized by "spaces and relationships that were . . . amphibious, archipelagic, and multifaceted," see Truett, "Settler Colonialism," 438.

63 My first published use of the term *borderwaters* appears in Roberts and Stephens, "Archipelagic American Studies: Decontinentalizing," 9. A few months prior, Tyson Reeder used this term in his "'Sovereign Lords' and 'Dependent Administrators': Artigan Privateers, Atlantic Borderwaters, and State Building in the Early Nineteenth Century." Since 2012 I have become aware of the term *borderwaters*' use in an insightful essay by Omise'eke Natasha Tinsley, "Black Atlantic, Queer Atlantic: Queer Imaginings of the Middle Passage." I draw on this usage in chapter 3 of the present study. In 2019 Kyrstin Mallon Andrews also offered an insightful description of the notion of *borderwaters* as a framework and lens for thinking about borders in the Caribbean. Andrews, "Borderwaters: Conversing with Fluidity at the Dominican Border," *Cultural Anthropology*, October 29, 2019, https://culanth.org/fieldsights/borderwaters.

64 Yaeger, "Sea Trash," 524.

65 Bolton, *Spanish Borderlands*; and Bolton, "Epic of Greater America," 473, 448, 473.

66 Adelman and Aron, "From Borderlands to Borders," 816.

67 Hämäläinen and Truett, "On Borderlands," 338, 348.

68 Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera*, 3.

69 Brady, "Border," 36; and Cutler, "New Border," 499.

70 Cutler, "New Border," 499.

71 Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs*, 11.

72 Mignolo and Tlostanova, "Theorizing from the Borders," 208.

73 Mignolo and Tlostanova, "Theorizing from the Borders," 207.

74 On the place of Du Bois's reference to "the islands of the sea" in the archipelagic study of American culture, see Roberts and Stephens, "Archipelagic American Studies: Decontinentalizing," 10.

75 Mignolo and Walsh, *On Decoloniality*, 5, 1.

76 Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs*, 6, 4.

77 Mignolo and Tlostanova, "Theorizing from the Borders," 209–10.

78 Brathwaite, "Caribbean Theme," 246. In this quotation I change Brathwaite's *Guadaloupe* to the more standard *Guadeloupe*.

79 Brathwaite states, "The Caribbean, though sharing and inter-lapping, . . . does not fit into establishment African or North American notions of cultural diversity and integration." Brathwaite, *Contradictory Omens*, 5.

80 Deleuze, "Desert Islands," 9.

81 Bishop, "Map," 3.

82 Brathwaite, *History of the Voice*, 42.

83 Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera*, 1, 3.

84 Glissant, "Unforeseeable Diversity of the World," 292.

85 Schwyzer, introduction to *Archipelagic Identities*, 4. John Kerrigan's lengthy discussion on why his archipelagic study does not extend to America is also illuminating on the ways the archipelagic may stand in tension with boundaries. Kerrigan, *Archipelagic English*, 57–59.

86 This conversation occurred after my talk "Archipelagoes, Oceans, and Visual Theorizing" for the Brigham Young University Art Department Lecture Series in March 2017.

87 Butcher and Elson, *Sovereignty and the Sea*, 52–53.

88 Quoted in Hsu, "Hierarchies of Migration Rights," 1. Thanks to Hsu for sharing the written version of this talk and for permitting me to cite it.

89 Quoted in Hsu, "Hierarchies of Migration Rights," 13–14.

90 Sawczyn, "United States Immigration Policy toward Cuba."

91 "Why Is the South China Sea Contentious?," *BBC News*, July 12, 2016, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-13748349. Byrnes, "The Infrastructure of Coral."

92 Singer and Cole, *Ghost Fleet*, 3–7.

93 Geng, "Legality of Foreign Military Activities," 27; and Anthony Kuhn, "China Is Placing Underwater Sensors in the Pacific near Guam," *NPR*, February 6, 2018, https://www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2018/02/06/582390143/china-is-placing-underwater-sensors-in-the-pacific-near-guam.

94 Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, 7, 6. Also on the composite thinking of nature and culture, see Latour, *Facing Gaia*, 7–40.

95 Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera*, 3.

96 Eckel, in Blum et al., roundtable review of *Archipelagic American Studies*, 5.

97 On transnational American studies as potentially an academic superstructure of globalized neoliberalism, see Bérubé, "American Studies without Exceptions." On *American studies* as the dominant institutionalized term for what is perhaps more accurately but much less frequently referred to as *critical US studies*, see Radway, "What's in a Name?"; and Aravamudan, "Rogue States and Emergent Disciplines," 18.

98 See Traister, "Object of Study."

99 For important discussions of islands and post- and decoloniality, see Nadarajah and Grydehøj, "Island Studies as a Decolonial Project"; and Gómez-Barris and Joseph, "Coloniality and Islands," 1–10.

100 See "About the Author" pages in Tsao, *Oddfits*; and Tsao, *More Known World*.

101 Tsao, *More Known World*, 144.

102 Tsao, *More Known World*, 48.

103 Tsao, *More Known World*, 125, 126, 196.

104 Walcott, "Isla Incognita," 56.

105 Du Bois, *Souls of Black Folk*, 15.