

An aerial photograph of a coastline, showing a road on the left and the ocean on the right. The image is oriented vertically, with the road at the top and the ocean at the bottom. The colors are vibrant, with deep blues and greens in the water and warm oranges and yellows in the land.

ROB WILSON

OCEANIC BECOMING

THE PACIFIC
BENEATH THE
PAVEMENTS

OCEANIC BECOMING



BUY

OCEANIC BECOMING

The Pacific beneath the Pavements

.....

Rob Wilson

DUKE

UNIVERSITY
PRESS

DUKE UNIVERSITY PRESS DURHAM & LONDON 2025

© 2025 DUKE UNIVERSITY PRESS

All rights reserved

Printed in the United States of America

on acid-free paper ∞

Project Editor: Michael Trudeau

Designed by Matthew Tauch

Typeset in Warnock Pro by Westchester Publishing Services

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Wilson, Rob, [date] author.

Title: Oceanic becoming : the Pacific beneath the pavements /
Rob Wilson.

Description: Durham : Duke University Press, 2025. | Includes
bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2024028356 (print)

LCCN 2024028357 (ebook)

ISBN 9781478031475 (paperback)

ISBN 9781478028260 (hardcover)

ISBN 9781478060468 (ebook)

Subjects: LCSH: Ocean and civilization. | Climatic changes—Social
aspects—Pacific Area. | Globalization—Environmental aspects—
Pacific Area. | Marine resources conservation—Economic aspects—
Pacific Area. | Sea in literature.

Classification: LCC CB465 .W55 2025 (print) | LCC CB465 (ebook) |

DDC 320.1/2091823—DC23/ENG/20241216

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2024028356>

LC ebook record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2024028357>

Cover art: Illustration by Matthew Tauch, from a photograph
by Rob Wilson.

DUKE
UNIVERSITY
PRESS

CONTENTS

Acknowledgments vii

INTRODUCTION · Pacific beneath the Pavements · *Toward a Blue
Ecopoetics of Oceanic Belonging* 1

I WORLDING PACIFIC POESIS

ONE · Becoming Oceania · *Ecopoetics across the Planetary Pacific
Rim, or “Walking on Water Wasn’t Built in a Day”* 31

TWO · Worlding Asia Pacific into Oceania · *Concepts, Tactics,
and Transfigurations inside the Anthropocene* 51

II WORLDING THE PACIFIC RIM

THREE · *Toward a Blue Ecopoetics · Worlding the Asia Pacific
Region into Figurations of Oceania at Monterey Bay* 71

FOUR · *Migrant Blockages, Global Flows · Worlding San
Francisco in a Global-Local and Transoceanic Frame* 92

D

U

K

E

UNIVERSITY
PRESS

III TRANSPACIFIC CONJUGATIONS: UNMAKING AND
REMAKING WORLDS

FIVE · Under a Golden Gate “Mushroom Cloud” · *Urban
Space, Ecological Consciousness, and the Pedagogy of Blue
Conversion* 111

SIX · Hiroshima Sublime · *Trauma, Japan, and the US Asia
Pacific Imaginary* 126

SEVEN · Waking to Global Capitalism and Oceanic
Decentering · *Reworlding US Poetics across Native Hawai‘i
and the Pacific Rim* 141

EPILOGUE · Transplanted Poesis · *Writing Oceania and
the World* 161

Notes 167

Bibliography 197

Index 219

DUKE

UNIVERSITY
PRESS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The premodern Japanese poet Matsuo Bashō is rumored to have advised his fellow haiku questers, “Do not seek to follow in the footsteps of the men [or women] of old; seek what they sought.” In the course of writing this transoceanic book laden with lifelong scholarly and poetic commitments, sites, and places from coastal California to Hawai‘i, Oceania, Taiwan, South Korea, Hong Kong, and Japan, some crucial mentors have departed. Among them, three haunting and “aftering” figures of Asia Pacific renown abide—namely, Masao Miyoshi, Arif Dirlik, and Kenzaburō Ōe. I continue, in my own belated way, to “seek what they sought” as scholarly and writing ethos and as world-making obligation.

Over these years and shifting contexts I have continued to be influenced by, and indebted to, two long-lasting journals, *boundary 2: An International Journal of Literature and Culture* and *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, and the distinguished, prodding, and supportive editors at the head of these cultural and political collectives, Paul Bové and Kuan-hsing Chen. Affiliated scholars such as Donald Pease, Lindsay Waters, Jonathan Arac, Reynolds Smith, Beng-huat Chua, Meaghan Morris, Colleen Lye, Soyoun Kim, Ping-hui Liao, Kim-Uchang, Hsinya Huang, Andy Chi-Ming Wang, and others have been a cocreative part of this crucial configuration. These figures have supported special issues over these years and

geohistorical contexts and provoked shifting discursive turns of reworlding vision for this author, and I remain grateful.

Other scholars working more centrally in the critical oceanic frame, particularly Steve Mentz and Elizabeth DeLoughrey, as well as the late Paul Lyons, have also proved lasting influences and enablers of shifting tropes and turns. Writers and artists as diverse as Gary Pak, Steve Bradbury, Susan Schultz, Joseph Puna Balaz, Juliana Spahr, Maxine Hong Kingston, Michael Ondaatje, and Jake Thomas also figure in this Asia Pacific world-making, and oceanic trajectory enacted herein.

The University of California at Santa Cruz has been my institutional home since I moved from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa in 2001. Scholars and writers here, including Christopher Connery, Karen Tei Yamashita, Susan Gilman, Kirsten Silva Gruesz, Ronaldo Wilson, Micah Perks, and Christine Hong as well as transdisciplinary figures such as James Clifford and Donna Haraway, have influenced these transformations of an Americanist-trained scholar, creative writer, and teacher into a more global-local, ecological, and Asia Pacific one, and I remain grateful. I also need to invoke the support and influence from the Center for European and American Studies at Academia Sinica in Taipei, Taiwan, and its affiliated universities and scholars there. Serena Chou's environmental vision as activated around the Farm for Change project has enabled eco-poetic works across "Asia Pacific becoming Oceania," and the support of the institute's leader, Norman Teng, as well as of the National Science Council, has proved helpful across these transpacific projects, years, sites, and distances.

Duke University Press has been the crucial outlet for nearly all of the books and coedited collections I have published from the 1990s to the present. For the shape and totality of this capstone work, *Oceanic Becoming: The Pacific beneath the Pavements*, I am grateful for the input, advice, and support from Ken Wissoker, Michael Trudeau, and Kate Mullen, as well as from others behind the discursive scene, such as the design team and copyeditor. As Donna Haraway has long urged, such modes of creating and world making are always a "creating with" (sym-poetic) undertaking of interconnection and entangled work and care.

DUKE

UNIVERSITY
viii PRESS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

INTRODUCTION

.....

Pacific beneath the Pavements

Toward a Blue Eco poetics of Oceanic Belonging

Without an understanding
of the world system and the sea as the space of commerce
it is hard to integrate that other
most important fact of our era. Pirates [riots].

· JOSHUA CLOVER, *Red Epic*

Occluded beneath the oblivious pavements of prosperous global cities such as San Francisco, Seoul, Taipei, and Hong Kong—not to mention Euro-distant Berlin and Hamburg (with their ex-colonial ties to Western Samoa and North Sea access to world oceans) or Paris (hub of the French Pacific in Tahiti, site of toxic nuclear testing)—the ebb and flow of the Pacific Ocean abides as a hydraulic system, source of life and breath, material resource, planetary nexus, and site of plasticene and industrial oil spill and waste: Anthropocene reminder.¹ This mighty Pacific Ocean, as Herman Melville prefigured by the mid-nineteenth century of American adventurism, belts, links, and zones the whole world into geospatial integration—he called, one hundred years before the environmental science of Rachel Carson, “the terraqueous globe.”² Gazing into the future, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, San Francisco poet and founder of City Lights Press, could

D

DUKE
UNIVERSITY
PRESS

see this disturbed ocean overtaking city embankments, streets, and sidewalks that have made North Beach a dwelling place for art, commerce, culture, coffee house, and community. “[San Francisco’s] all going to be underwater in 100 years or maybe even 50,” Ferlinghetti warned in 2017. “The Embarcadero is one of the greatest esplanades in the world. On the weekends, thousands of people strut up and down like it’s the Ramblas in Barcelona. But it’ll all be underwater.”³ Venice might be worst-case scenario of a world city threatened by oceans. As the Asiatic rises above and below city canals, streets, and foundations, the technologies of an adjustable oceanfront wall and pumped-in underground saltwater cannot forestall threats of urban disaster.⁴ The ocean is not just under this city but inside it, over it, rising above its walls and paved streets, as it is even in a smaller coastal city such as Santa Cruz, California, where I am writing this.

Ferlinghetti knew as a World War II naval submarine officer defending against German U-boat attacks at Normandy and Norway, and as an aftermath witness to the Nagasaki and Hiroshima bombings in devastated Japan, that the Pacific Ocean (like the Atlantic) was never that *pacific* as an ocean site in the modern world system. This proved so across world history, despite Ferdinand Magellan’s ill-fated trope baptizing “el Mar Pacifico” while traversing myriad archipelagos in 1521 for the Portuguese and Spanish Catholic Church. Ferlinghetti refused to defend the use of nuclear weapons in Japan to induce capitulation in August 1945. “In that instant,” Ferlinghetti admitted years later, “I became a total pacifist.” These American wars across the Pacific, as later in Korea and Vietnam, turned Ferlinghetti from US militarism and toward pacifist activism, a poetics of resistance, and the community he would help build around City Lights Bookstore in the transpacific city of San Francisco after the war. “It was a monstrous, racist act, the worst the U.S. ever committed,” Ferlinghetti contended, looking back on his career. “Had the Japanese been white-skinned, those bombs would not have dropped.”⁵

Unstable atmospheric currents of El Niño and La Niña have made climate patterns across the Pacific Rim more threatening with flood and drought, disruptive events on a seasonal if not daily basis. This Pacific Ocean (like the Empire-laden Mediterranean, Atlantic, Adriatic, and Indian oceans) has become filled with history, struggle, bloodshed, exploitation, ideological division, and projection, from Vietnam and Manila to Guam, Fiji, the Solomon Islands, Jakarta, and Pearl Harbor. As origin and frontier, this Pacific becomes diversely figured and transfigured into primordial

mother water and cargo lane, hydraulic matter and trans-species element, as “blue” consciousness and as integrating biosphere, alpha, and omega off the coasts of the Americas and Asia, as if some dream of trans-indigenous Oceania, or infrastructural apparatus and commercial ideologue.⁶ At deeper levels of urban-oceanic interconnection, this blue Pacific has darkened, blackened, and reddened with plastic waste, dying coral reefs, proliferating jellyfish, toxic agribusiness remainders, radioactive traces, raw heat, record-breaking typhoons, extreme weather events.⁷ As in the North Atlantic city of Hamburg, with its recurrent flooding and “waterlogged history” moving from the medieval struggles of the Hanseatic League integration down to the financial terrains of its becoming a cosmopolitan global hub for the European Union, as Kay MacFarlane reminds us, “both the city’s prosperity and its precarity have been closely tied to its marshland geography.”⁸ Germany, despite its continental impact across the twentieth century—if not earlier in the imperial scramble for Africa and expansion eastward and westward—remains a deeply oceanic nation.

In the wake of hegemonic globalization and techno-integration, this world-ocean Pacific has become all but covered and troped over with pavement tracks and containerized shipping routes, garbage heaps, real estate schemes, DDT waste, “South Pacific” romance, storm, tsunami, Google warehouses, radioactive specters, Godzilla, and worse. Still, as I argue here, this “Pacific becoming Oceania” reflects primordial longings for bio-marine sustenance and environmental endurance within and across this ocean. In effect, this ocean commons of the Pacific needs to be figured as both *peril* and *promise*, articulated at social and ecological levels that trace damage and potentialities, as elaborated in later chapters reflecting transpacific contexts and urban sites of dwelling, connecting, resisting, and world belonging, from coastal California across the Pacific to Oceania, Asia, and the Pacific Rim.⁹ Since subscribing to the exclusive economic zone’s maritime doctrine of two hundred nautical miles of offshore boundaries in 1982—as Brian Russell Roberts argues, while decentering continental-centered frameworks of the United States into an “archipelagic” nation of oceanic-island fluidity and “border water” remaking—“The United States Is an Ocean Nation.”¹⁰ Cities along the Pacific Rim and at the Oceania or Asian edge of oceanic becoming—from Auckland, New Zealand, to Hong Kong and Kaohsiung, Taiwan—embody the precarity (peril) and prosperity (promise) of this global-local positioning across this world-ocean Pacific. When we gaze, as Ferlinghetti did from the Embarcadero walkway along San Francisco Bay, across to Hiroshima

and the Solomon Islands, do we project the precarious history as when he transfigured coastal California at an Anthropocene end?

How do we figure forth hidden yet ever present links to this maltroped, occluded, circulatory, endangered, un-pacific, and archipelagic Pacific; this blue *pharmakon* (remedy and toxin) of ocean water that embodies both healing and poisoning presence? To far-flung coastal citizens whose prosperity generates effects gone awry, such as the Great Pacific Garbage Heap and the oil spills of Santa Barbara, as well as the nuclearized overflow of Fukushima, this is what the Maori scholar Alice Te Ponga Somerville unpacks as “the (American) Pacific you cannot see.”¹¹ What tactics or figurations of world-making *poesis* are needed to bring into critical/poetic articulation urban, coastal, island, and archipelagic links to this “Great Ocean” of epochal transformation that took far-flung historical effect across the globe? How do we grasp layers of Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, British, French, American, Chinese, Japanese, and German Enlightenment contact and colonial entanglement, not to mention the scientific integration of the Pacific into the world capitalist system of Greenwich Mean Time, as well as the dynamism of global-capitalist modernity that now rules as naturalized norm, if not ethos and aesthetic?¹² To invoke a Japanese-influenced haiku by African American novelist Richard Wright on this oceanic presence as a breathing world body, filling each instant with what the English post-priest Gerard Manley Hopkins called (in a Roman Catholic register) the “world-mothering air” of blue sustenance and planetary nourishment:

The ocean in June:
Inhaling and exhaling,
But never speaking.¹³

Still, as Elspeth Probyn urges of this waste-transforming and nourishing element of the world ocean that is around, above, and inside us, “Eating the ocean: We do it every day, often without knowing it.”¹⁴ Food resources link sites, shores, and cities through fishing, farming, consuming, polluting, wasting, bioprospecting, and consuming its oceanic creatures. From Sydney, Honolulu, Auckland, Seattle, Vancouver, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Tokyo, and Seoul along the Pacific Rim to Glasgow, Dublin, Oslo, and London across the Northern Atlantic, saltwater ties and oceanic affects become ingested, processed, embodied, and all but forgotten in urban settings upscale.¹⁵ *Worlding poesis*, as an actively critical and constructive

process, might help to figure forth such responsible modes of world belonging, projecting tactics of dwelling together and multiscalar communing. These can happen in the “blue humanities” of oceanic and archipelagic recognition via revealing land-sea interconnections that spread across material-semiotic binaries that come to be called (by Donna Haraway, Anna Tsing, Edgar Garcia, and others) modes of trans-species *sympoiesis*—that is, poesis as a *making with* coral reefs and marine creatures, snails and whales, sharks and quarks, macro and micro forces, signs on Earth and in the sky that indigenous peoples long cultivated and lived beside.

These ties, signs, linkages, bonds, and balances are threatened by late capitalist patterns of consumption, extraction, extinction, and all-too-poisoned Apple production chains of labor and surplus value from Silicon Valley back and forth across the Pacific to Greater China, Europe, and the world.¹⁶ Linked to and living with this *oceanic commons*, at least here beside and across the Pacific Ocean in coastal California, has all but modulated from the “Asia/Pacific” hub of geo-economic dynamism and the preferred US-hegemonic trope of the “Pacific Rim,” which came to prominence in research sites and policy projects in California across the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s as Chris Connery has mapped as global-capitalist necessity. This region has gone on changing, if not booming and busting, into the commercial, air traffic, and cultural transit of some open-ended, unregulated “transpacific” flow—one that Global China nonetheless threatens (as the ill-fated Trump regime abolished “transpacific” trade contracts and environmental commitments that the Obama administration had ratified from Paris to Kyoto) to integrate into some post-Bandung neo-Silk Road of the “Great Chinese Dream.” With or without post-COVID Trumpian affiliation, racial stigmatization, and tariff blockage, Global China (centered on state one-party hegemony in the People’s Republic of China [PRC]) projects, implements, and funds this *transpacific* vision as a One Belt, One Road unity spread across world oceans, as well as across distant continents, into one infrastructural investment and commercial—if not geopolitical or cultural—dominion.¹⁷ Chinese expansion is often critiqued as a top-down threat to the archipelagic United States in and across the Pacific, even as this rebordering US nation continues to shift from seeing itself as what Roberts terms a “majority-continent to a majority-ocean” people moving across postwar hegemony.¹⁸

As a global nation seeking to install an alternative hegemony across the Pacific via the southward oceanic telos it has long projected historically, as did Japan in the buildup to World War II around Pearl Harbor

and Guadalcanal, this ocean-challenging China of naval, financial, and technological might has already built four hundred buildings on just one of its man-made islands constructed on the Subi Reef in the South China Sea, amid the contested Spratly Islands off the coasts of the Philippines, Malaysia, and Vietnam.¹⁹ As if to signal the international instability of this Pacific region and the waning naval hegemony of the United States as measured against the rising presence of this maritime China, the US Pacific Command (PACCOM), with headquarters at Pearl Harbor, has been renamed the US Indo-Pacific Command Center, as if India has become the key affiliated naval player in the region. The Trump administration turned what was called for three or more decades the “Asia Pacific” region into the “Indo-Pacific” to signal that India, not China, bookends the US military hegemony across this oceanic region—“from Hollywood to Bollywood, from polar bears to penguins,” as US Secretary of Defense James Mattis phrased this shift of names, tropes, and visions from the “American Pacific” in Hawai‘i.²⁰ As the *Economic Times* of India warned, this renaming reflects “a largely symbolic move to signal India’s importance to the US military amid heightened tensions with China over the militarisation of the South China Sea.”²¹ India does have a deeply oceanic history via the seas of Arabia and India, as well as across the Pacific, but becoming an international military or naval power of global consequence is not yet one of its primary global aims as it at least rises to BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India, China) economic recognition.

This Pacific Ocean—laden with worldly history, memory, community, conflict, and trope—not only becomes a “physical space” of oceanic materiality and physical exchange; it is once again projected as a “horizon of possibility” linking the cultures between Asia and across the United States and its Pacific claims and flows. Hua Hsu describes this “floating” transpacific of dream and scheme as some enduring Chinese nexus of “transience, motion, and flux” from the Gold Mountain days of building railroads to the containerized shipping power of the Pacific-facing China of Nanjing, Shanghai, Guangzhou.²² An action movie such as Rupert Sanders’s *Ghost in the Shell* (2017), based on Mamoro Oshii’s Japanese anime classic from 1995, captures this transpacific flux in its post-*Blade Runner* ambient mix of Hong Kong, Shanghai, Tokyo, Long Beach, and Los Angeles into some post-Orientalist fusion of dream, machine, lust, flesh, and scheme. No less inventively as transpacific cinema, Wes Anderson’s translingual (Japanese and English) film *Isle of Dogs* (2018) gets at this brave new world of machinic flesh and trans-species critters (it’s a

dog-eat-dog world, as we say of capitalist mores from Tokyo to San Francisco and Wall Street) toxically, in a post-Hiroshima and post-Japanese internment modality, to reveal the cruelty, injustice, and nuclear horrors inside this island-hopping dream spread along the Pacific Rim.²³

Jasper Bernes has portrayed this dystopian captivity of ocean beaches under the pavements of late capitalist Los Angeles by excavating (in post-Situationist terms) sub-pavement layers of concrete urban enclosure in the devious haiku “documents” poem from *Starsdown*:

Under the parking lot, the beach.
Under the beach, the parking lot.²⁴

Beneath the concrete, via urban synecdoche, there is still more concrete stifling ocean flow and occluding Pacific watersheds along the once thriving Los Angeles River. Beneath world ocean floors, more hopefully, Australian marine scientists are coming to discover there may exist resources of freshwater aquifers that could help Earth dwellers to deal with heat droughts and rising currents that are being projected for 2030 by the United Nations.²⁵

Our anxiety over late capitalist urban enclosure, political stasis, and anti-utopic demoralization may sound a bit like this rueful refrain from a Parisian tweet expressing how post-1968 revolutionary energies have passed us by as possibility: “Sous les pavés: la plage. Sous la plage: plus des pavés. Sous ces pavés: une rue. Pavé par une plage.”²⁶ Still there is another story to tell—what Dale Pendell, in his biopoetics as trans-species bonding with flora and fauna and alchemical transformation of earth and planet, calls the “understory” that needs to be given a second chance before end-times are here.²⁷

Pacific Awakening in the Berlin Anthropocene

While living and working in various cities inside and along the Pacific Rim since the mid-1970s I came to cosmic realization of our world entanglement, oceanic occlusion, and urban obliviousness. This oceanic epiphany took place at the Haus der Kulturen der Welt (House of World Cultures) in the postmodern city of Berlin in 2013, where I was speaking as part of an international conference (with the Pacific writers Albert Wendt, Juliana Spahr, Reina Whaitiri, and Axel Hein, among others) on

what the museum planners called “The Invisible Pacific.” The program used thematic slogans of historical misinformation, such as “Circling the Void: Long Night of the Pacific,” to capture German audiences’ attention. The conference was also part of a multicultural “Wassermusic” (Water Music) program filled with diverse works of Asian Pacific multiplicity at the same time that this progressive institution hosted a vanguard series of scholarly talks and “museum without walls” interventions into canals, plazas, and walkways of Berlin to awaken public awareness to what was coming to be called here, as elsewhere, the Anthropocene.²⁸

Given this large-scale enframing into a global *telos* of world extraction and extinction, island ecologies and spaces are all the more threatened by world-capitalist and carbon-driven industry since the Industrial Era and accelerated by the atomic explosions at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, as well as at the Bikini Atoll across the Pacific Ocean.²⁹ Berlin, this urban, hip, and cosmopolitical post-1989 city, felt close to this endangered Pacific of toxic coral in the Great Barrier Reef and the melting icebergs and heating waters of the Arctic region having an impact on cities and farmland from India to Peru. At least we were becoming aware of distant islands such as Tuvalu disappearing back into “some void Pacific” in which the Pacific islanders will live on only as a website in a far-flung diaspora from their island home.³⁰ It no longer makes sense, as during earlier phases of urban globalization (such as the buildup for the 1939 San Francisco World’s Fair), to figure San Francisco or Los Angeles as coastal cities of frontier-space California staring into “the void Pacific,” or just second-rate urban Asia models as distant belated copies of urban splendor in the empire cities of Paris, Vienna, and Rome.³¹

Sous les pavés, la plage! (Under the paving stones, the beach!): Can this geopolitical call to psycho-geographical disruption reawaken subterranean energies latent inside or beneath the city form? This revenant slogan from the streets of Paris in 1968, as well as from Berlin in 1989, will stand for what I call here (more broadly framed as reworlding synecdoche) “the Pacific beneath the pavements.” This slogan, in effect, calls out for urban citizens to disrupt spectacles of neoliberalism and everyday urban space; to challenge commercial normalcy at the arcade and mall; to intervene in the political stalemate and mass-mediated discourse.

This call for geopolitical eruption scrawled on walls of demonstration-ridden Paris endures in cultural studies as a post-Situationist slogan of resistance to spectacles of capital domineering over urban streets as commercial traffic and consumption. McKenzie Wark uses this slogan

for *The Beach beneath the Street: The Everyday Life and Glorious Times of the Situationist International*, wherein he invokes Situationist tactics (*derive*, *detournement*, to use situation as intervention) for urban transformation and creative use.³² If resituated as a tactic of worlding politics and oceanic poetics, that same “submarine” street slogan from Paris ’68 can provoke post-Situationist critiques, surrealist dreams, and interventions into urban life as domesticated under capital. Wark elaborates: “One [dynamic of urban intervention] was communist, and demanded equality. The other was bohemian, and demanded difference.”³³

This reframing of urban prosperity and complacency inside the Anthropocene makes urban-oceanic reckoning and worlding tactics along the Pacific Rim and across Oceania all the more urgent as Earth dwellers become urban citizens on the endangered planet.³⁴ As Nick Mirzoeff urges, the “politics of seeing” inside the global city of capitalist expansion has become foreclosed, suggesting a failure of social imagination and collective futurity: “There were once eight million stories inside the *Naked City* (1948), but now there’s only one: the endless rise of the one per cent for the one per cent.”³⁵ Class polarization, securitized segregation, resource extraction in distant sites across orders, habitat destruction, and community uprooting via gentrification, as well as various forms and modes of environmental plunder (sublimated into plastic or greenwash disguise), have become givens of this “global city” as the dominant bioform from Beijing and Hong Kong to San Francisco, Berlin, Honolulu, and Rome. Such a habitus seems all but immune to political contestation or any surrealist dream projecting alter-reality.

Martin Jankowski, the German novelist host for our panels at the House of World Culture, reminded participants, as we talked beforehand about the “Invisible Pacific” event to be conducted as a chain-linked interview of writers, scholars, and marine biologists from the Atlantic to the Pacific, that the earlier German dream of “Visafrei bis nach Hawai’i” (visa-free travel all the way to Hawai’i) had served as a mobilizing slogan for mass demonstrations in Leipzig (East Germany) and West Berlin. These urban demonstrations resonated at the deepest level with the hunger for global travel and post-Beat longing that (among other social forces) helped lead to the fall of the Berlin Wall and to the opening of Germany to the dynamism of globalization that the rebuilt Berlin and open Brandenburg Gates now stand for inside the European Union. The beaches and saltwater of this remote Pacific Ocean, then as well as now, can call out to be reckoned with by a self-reinventing Europe (as across the transnationalizing

Americas) beyond the reign of urban capitalist modernity. These cities have seen movements and generations contesting the geo-ecological impact of rising tides and shifting coasts, from the North Atlantic of beach-town New Jersey to the monster surfs of coastal Northern California Pacific and tidal-threatened Pacifica, not to mention the coastal real estate of Florida and North Carolina that only the most climate-denying anti-science forces inside can continue to ignore as extreme weather.

Visa-free travel had become the anti-Wall German dream of visa card travel to white beaches and eternal summer, such as those in the islands of Hawai'i, Tahiti, and Guam, far from urban Berlin and Dresden. This is how a blog entry recounts those East German contexts to which I have been alluding, which led to the mobilizing call and that transpacific slogan “Visafrei bis nach Hawai'i”:

At about 7.30pm on 9 November 1989 a spokesman for the GDR [German Democratic Republic] government said on television that all restrictions on foreign travel by GDR citizens were lifted with immediate effect. Vast crowds gathered near the Brandenburg Gate (on the East Berlin side) and demanded their right to travel to West Berlin. After initial bewilderment, the East German border guards let them cross. (This had been preceded by several weeks of demonstrations demanding, among other things, freedom of travel. “Visafrei bis nach Hawaii”—“visa free travel, all the way to Hawaii” had been one of the key slogans.)³⁶

The pressure of such mass demonstrations in Berlin and Leipzig (which the younger Berkeley- and Paris-influenced Martin Jankowski had participated in as a protesting student inside the GDR) led to the fall of the wall on November 9, 1989, marking the fall of the socialist GDR regime and the opening of Germany to forces of mobility, democratization, liberalization, and what would become a more transnational Europe of open borders and cosmopolitical contestation.³⁷

As Tom Brislin recounted in pages of the *Honolulu Advertiser* on the tenth anniversary of the Berlin Wall's dismantlement in 1999, “German journalist Kristin Schonfelder recalls shouting the slogan as a nineteen-year-old university student with thousands of other candle-holding marchers, pushing back the darkness of the streets of Leipzig in the weeks before the crumbling of the Berlin Wall. ‘It means “Without a visa to Hawaii,” Schonfelder says. ‘We wanted freedom to travel as far as we wanted, and Hawaii was the farthest away of any place we could imagine. And now,

10 years later, I am here. I never would have thought it possible.”³⁸ Resonant with the Native Hawaiian struggle for political sovereignty and the right to sacred mountain access and oceanic custody of its island environment linking ocean and land, this Hawai’i of Oceania is not all that far from the geopolitical energies and environmental dreams of Berlin, Tokyo, Washington, Los Angeles, or the transpacific city of San Francisco—that Bay Area city of “blue mind” orientation “surrounded by water on three sides.”³⁹

To contribute to what is coming to be called the “blue humanities” of oceanic and archipelagic studies, we still need to extend world making (as the German expression has it) “ins Blaue hinein”: into those blue depths, entanglements, and planetary, as well as localized, mixtures of the blue (healing) and red (endangered) ocean.⁴⁰ The ocean is felt, lived, and worlded into—*pharmakon*, that figure crucial not only to Plato and Jacques Derrida but also to the emergent biopoetics I am invoking here around the comparative poetics of metamorphosis, conversion, transfiguration, environmental imagination, and trans-species belonging that Norman O. Brown and Dale Pendell called the becoming multiple vocation of worlding into sanctified presence as “love’s body.”⁴¹

Break on through World Divisions

If we could get beyond urban confinement and coastal capture to so-called Oceania here being figured forth as ecological future and planetary commons, if the cultural-political front could only more collectively *break on through to the other side* of the Anthropocene, as the Doors conjured in the heady protest and Blakean days of 1967, then these urban pavements might be broken up, dismantled, collaged, even used as weapons cast against the forces of state repression and global-local containment that Allen Ginsberg memorably evoked in *Howl* as the San Francisco and Market Street figure of Moloch. Such modes of resistance I had lived through as a generational tactic, not only in the Berkeley demonstrations of the late 1960s, where I was an undergraduate in English at the University of California (UC), Berkeley, and a fringe member of the Haight-Ashbury in San Francisco, but also in the worker- and student-led mass street demonstrations daily marching against the South Korean military government of President Chun Do-won when I was a Fulbright Professor of American literature at Korea University in Seoul from 1982

to 1984.⁴² Such energies of resistance have linked the Occupy movements in the Bay Area port city of Oakland and other cities across Northern California into a formation that Marxist critics from UC Davis, UC Berkeley, and UC Santa Cruz have called a Red Triangle struggling against the forces of privatization and debt bondage.⁴³

This eruptive “beach” of utopic waters and sands living under locked-in pavements and ports of modern Paris was well known to post-’60s Californians, for whom a “subterranean homesick” politics called out for antiwar unrest, urban refusal, social movement, and human rights demonstrations as merged with post-Beat tactics from the libidinal bohemian culture of the Beats, the Doors, Sun Ra, and the Hendrix trio and the caustic visionary allegories of Bob Dylan. Invoking “the beach beneath the pavements”—in Paris then; Berlin later; or Seoul, Oakland, New York, and San Francisco—can stand now for reawakening what has been called “a subaltern vitality, the control of something unruly, the dominance of nature, and a possible return of the repressed . . . , [as well as] a new kind of social imagination, a right to view the city as a space of democratic possibilities, a social geography of freedom,” as Benjamin Shepard and Greg Smithsimon contend in portraying New York City’s urban domination of pleasure, community, and resource in *The Beach Beneath the Streets: Contesting New York City’s Public Spaces*.⁴⁴

Walter Benjamin once theorized those “ragpicker” forms of consumer capital to be excavated through Baudelaire’s urban sidewalks and iron-and-glass Arcade settings in Paris as so many “dialectical images” in fleeting illuminations of the sacred within urban settings in *Les Fleurs du Mal*. “The Paris of [Baudelaire’s] poems is a submerged city,” Benjamin contends, “more submarine than subterranean.”⁴⁵ Indeed, any modern city form itself depends on abundant water supplies for its conurbation buildup, from reservoirs to ports, from lakes and rivers to oceans, for livelihood and survival, as I discuss when examining the transpacific and Silicon Valley “imperial city” of San Francisco not just as a “subterranean” Beat site but also as a “submarine” cultural-political space of far-flung watersheds; rivers from the Sierras and Nevada; and abundant Pacific nourishment at Fisherman’s Wharf and in the gourmet-ghetto bistros of Berkeley, Marin County, and Napa Valley. Sophie Gonick has urged seeing global cities such as San Francisco as a “city of contradictions” wherein progressive politics and the nineteenth-largest economy in the world confront high-tech hegemony, housing scarcity, class polarization,

and the threat of rising sea levels: “In a moment in which the populist right wing is ascendant globally, cities can serve as beacons of hope with robust local articulations of democracy, alternative modes of politics and inhabitation, and popular imaginaries of the good life against the revanchism of many central governments.”⁴⁶

The hope remains that a subterranean/submarine “psycho-geography” of dis-alienated being will one day be released from beneath the pavements and ports of the global city into everyday domains of pleasure, freedom, abundance, release, festival, disalienation, dream, and what Brown called the transfiguring release of “metapolitical” energies, tropes, and libidinal movements from below.⁴⁷ Such a “metapolitical” Pacific Ocean summoned from beneath urban pavements and this “oceanic consciousness” of unity would stand for more than a world multiculturalism that, wrongly configured, would reaffirm the superiority of Europe in literature and art amid the ongoing “de-Europeanization” and decentering of global culture, as Masao Miyoshi notes in his portrayal of the Documenta X art show at Kassel, Germany, in 1998.⁴⁸ Facing world environmental crisis, Miyoshi invoked what he termed a necessary *planetary* turn “to nurture our common bonds to the planet.”⁴⁹

Such a planetary-framed Pacific, situated in the emergent world of the “blue” environmental humanities, would stand for more than just another “‘Polynesianism’ without Polynesia” that Jean-Didier Urbain sees in European fantasies of beach and oceangoing from the era of Daniel Defoe and Jules Michelet through the 1950s. This is what Urbain calls a “*robinsonnade*” escape to the Pacific as site of world forgetfulness. In this long-wrought European “aesthetics of the void, that underlies the vacation conquest of the seacoast,” he argues, beachgoers would pacify the savage ocean and strip the middle-class tourist sites of native presence or lingering threats of phobia, terror, and slime.⁵⁰

Pacific Transfigurations

Awakening this paved-over Pacific and world oceans beneath terrestrial urban streets of capitalist development must evoke into “oceanic consciousness” not just dreams of metapolitical unification, promise, and release, but also more catastrophic implications, peril, and threat: the ocean as space of global warming, methane gas, decimated coral reefs, nuclearized tsunami

D

waters, and disappearing islands and glaciers, not to mention the mounting Great Pacific Garbage Patch of submarine waste lurking from coastal California to the waters of Hawai'i, Japan, and coastal China. The Pacific beneath the pavements of Europe and the Americas embodies not just the eroticism of the bikini (a postwar bathing brand of erotic titillation tellingly registered in 1946), but also the catastrophic impact of US nuclear testing across the Bikini Atoll, wherein sixty-seven nuclear weapons tests took place between 1946 and 1958. As the Native Pacific scholar and poet Teresia Kieuea Teaiwa has delineated, this "military-tourist" conjunction brings the world of Parisian eros (*the urban seen*) together with that of Pacific islander trauma, nuclear displacement of islanders, and radioactive slow death (*the urban unseen*) on the beach.⁵¹

At a level of urban consumption, Hong Kong's ties to world oceans occur not just through world-port shipping but also through abundant seafood consumption: having depleted local marine life and dependent on imported seafood, its citizens consume four times as much as the global average per capita. This taste for ubiquitous seafood eateries draws on the overfishing of unsustainable oceanic resources, "driving the collapse of the world's ocean fish stocks and edging many types of fish toward extinction," especially across the Pacific.⁵² Using William Burroughs's tactic of desublimating cutup, we might ask (as Burroughs did of Ginsberg), "If we cut you up, Hong Kong, who would we find inside?" The answer that lurks beneath the streets and ports of Hong Kong (or the wealth of London, Tokyo, Shanghai, or Berlin) is, we can and will find the nexus of *world oceans* sustaining the world city with world-mothering air and planet-circulating waters.

From the time of Shakespeare, if not earlier in biblical hermeneutics, as the "blue cultural poetics" scholar Steve Mentz has argued, the ocean has figured in the Western imagination as both "a challenge to empirical understanding on the one hand, and seeing it as a divine Absolute, a God space that humankind can see but not understand on the other."⁵³ The allure of the transhuman ocean as space of God mystery, metamorphosis, death, and self-transformation—haunting magical-realist novels such as Yann Martel's *Life of Pi* (2001), David Mitchell's *Cloud Atlas* (2004), and Chang-rae Lee's dystopic *On Such a Full Sea* (2014), not to mention oceanic-based poems of indigenous world remaking such as the Maori poet Robert Sullivan's *Star Waka* (1999) and the Native Hawaiian poet Brandy Nalani McDougall's *The Salt Wind / Ka Makani Pa'akai* (2008), and ecopoetic works such as Juliana Spahr's *Well Then There Now* (2011),

discussed in later chapters—has figured as geomaterial substratum and medium of world-altering modernity.

Oceans are connected not just to the movement of capital, peoples, and goods, but also to the material formation of city watersheds, international polities, war, demonstration, migration, weather, utopic longing, dream. From Melville's catastrophic novel *Moby-Dick* to Jules Verne's enchanted *Vingt Mille Lieues sous les Mers* (*Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea*) to Martel's magical-mystical tour in *Life of Pi*, the Euro-American Pacific is portrayed as site of fabled sublimity and figurative allure, uncanny enchantment, exotic grandeur, death, if not registered (amid castaways, whales, sharks, tigers, or giant cuttlefish looming up) at times as some Bali Hai call (as in some ever-playing musical *South Pacific*) to global adventure, tourist quest, and cultural otherness.⁵⁴

Sea Slaves, Coral Reefs, Oceanic Cradles

"The Pacific beneath the pavements" can no longer mean recycled images of tourist-beach fantasy, as in *Blue Hawaii* (1961) and *Blue Crush* (2002), or surf festivals of oceanic conquest from Mavericks to the North Shore (as portrayed in Stacy Peralta's *Riding Giants* [2004]), for we are living not just in a precarious time of climate endangerment and class immiseration but also in a time when indigenous bodies of sweat and saltwater refuse to be commodified or exoticized across a decolonizing Oceania.⁵⁵ The Pacific beneath the pavements must, at the first ecological level, recall disappearing coral reefs and native islands being submerged, oceanic acidification, and thermal shifts amid the mounting North Pacific garbage gyres of transnational detritus between Japan and the United States. By the year 2050, with some eight million tons entering the oceans each year, there may be more waste plastic coursing in the oceans than fish.⁵⁶

An ocean-conscious ecopoetics tied to forces of "oceanic becoming" and the scale of a "blue humanities" environmental approach will have to confront such matters to articulate the submarine forms, coastal cities, and oceanic sites affected by the hyper-capitalist world. As Mark Lynas summarizes this telos of waste production, "Our detritus gets everywhere, from the highest mountains to the deepest oceans: abandoned plastic bags drift ghostlike in the unfathomable depths, even kilometers beneath the floating Arctic ice cap. Wherever you look, this truth is there to behold: [for] pristine nature—Creation—has disappeared forever."⁵⁷ International

search-and-rescue teams scouring the Indian Ocean off the west coast of Australia for signs of Malaysia Airlines Flight 370, as Barbara Demick observed, “discovered what oceanographers have been warning—that even the most far-flung stretches of ocean are full of garbage.”⁵⁸ The ocean is not just blue but red, brown, and violet in its chromatic signals of injury and distress.

“Sea slaves” of contemporary oceanic labor across world seas are exploited on “ghost ships” remote from cities that eat the cheap fish or feed their pets at home; hence, this forced, alienated labor is unseen, or sublimated into what Allan Sekula has portrayed and documents in film and essay as the process of “forgetting the ocean.”⁵⁹ The phobic warning placed on early-modern *mappamundi* maps to signify oceanic space as an unknown wilderness of eruptive monstrosity and world threat—“Hic Sunt Dracones” (Here be dragons)—may have to be reclaimed as planetary signal to register our own, displaced debris and supply chains of migrant sea labor.⁶⁰ “The unconscious was truly a *Mare Ignotum* [unknown ocean] when he first let himself into it,” as Murray Stein has written of Carl Jung’s quest to unlock psychic depths of oceanic subconsciousness, whereby “many of his most important intuitions originated in his experiences of the sublime, which came to him in dreams, visions, and active imagination [poesis].”⁶¹ The flotsam and jetsam of far-flung world oceans, as they digest the everyday life of global capitalism and urban excess, constitute a feedback system of “blue” and “green” signs of planetary equilibrium and renewal but, at the same time, radiate a far more dangerously “prismatic ecology” of violet-black, white, gray, and red warnings.⁶²

This oceanic waste and urbane unconsciousness is one effect of a global postmodernity that is full of uneven prosperity, disregard, and oblivion. At its American sublime origin, Walt Whitman’s poetic persona, birthing self into voice in “Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking” by the Long Island shores of the Atlantic, can only hear the ocean murmuring some threnody of world mortality to self and world, “the low and delicious word death / And again death, death, death, death.”⁶³ Whitman, like Jack Kerouac later, experienced the ocean as a “road” opening the self to the world in all its depths, risks, and perilous quest:

Not I, nor anyone else can travel that road for you.

You must travel it by yourself.

It is not far. It is within reach.

DUKE

UNIVERSITY
PRESS

Perhaps you have been on it since you were born and did not
know.
Perhaps it is everywhere—on water and land.

Whatever natural sublimity the ocean retains as a road or way or nexus of world transit linking land to planet and human beings to planetary becoming, it is still commonly portrayed as a space that is inhuman, alien, and deadly to inhabitable design as an element. The modernist poet Marianne Moore figured this antagonism felt by urban dwellers who confront the ocean as an immeasurable, inhuman, alien, and deadly element:

It is human nature to stand in the middle of a thing,
but you cannot stand in the middle of this;
the sea has nothing to give but a well excavated grave.⁶⁴

Bob Dylan's death-haunted album *Tempest* (2013) gets at the world-shattering threat of *oceanic unmaking* through his dreamy narrative retelling of that world-capitalist disaster, the sinking of the *RMS Titanic* in 1912. In the song "Tempest," Dylan recounts this oceanic trauma in spectral stanzas as if to awaken contemporary citizens from their own, forgetful luxury spreading across world seas of postmodernity: "The watchman he lay dreaming / Of all the things that can be / He dreamed the *Titanic* was sinking / Into the deep blue sea." As if recalling the storm-tossed *Tempest* and courtly shipwreck in Caliban's British Caribbean, Dylan's Atlantic recalls engulfing seas "as a basic inhuman-ness, an alterity that defines Shakespeare's ocean throughout his career."⁶⁵ Dylan's Beat-influenced lyric, "A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall" (1962), had been prophetic in its mourning for a nuclear-haunted planet, as in its blue-eyed-son lines of prescient warning, such as, "I've been out in front of a dozen dead oceans" and "where the pellets of poison are flooding their waters."

As Jeffrey Cohen has argued of the global confluences traversing the Atlantic and Mediterranean oceans that led to the rise of New York City as a littoral site of multilinguistic and cross-cultural conjunction and rupture, "Across spiraling planes (current, conveyance) as well as through vertical engulfment (drowning, oblivion), the ocean is transport and catastrophe."⁶⁶ The theorist Peter Sloterdijk warns in *Neither Sun nor Death* that, despite our global circulating since the era of Christopher Columbus and Ferdinand Magellan, "People born today do not develop any oceanic consciousness—neither in the phobic nor the philobatic

[self-avoiding of dangerous objects] sense,” leading Gaia into disaster zones of global (“spherical”) forgetting and broken unity we face as planetary horizon.⁶⁷ While a material biogenetic object of planetary magnitude and geo-ecological concern, the ocean remains for Sloterdijk one of those “sublime imaginary constructs of wholeness” we cannot conjure into contemporary world pictures of the spherical globe, given the terrestrial-centric predispositions that often still hold.⁶⁸ The miraculous ocean goes on breaking up under oblivious urban unconcern, in processes of *deworlding*, despite the National’s invocation in the recent pop song “Terrible Love,” of ocean as the figure of nature’s endurance amid broken romances: “It’s a terrible love and I’m walking with spiders / It takes an ocean not to break, It takes an ocean not to break.”

Global brands of pavement buildup are spreading across and along our oceanic planet as road, bridge, high rise, urban expansion, artificial island, and beachfront encroachments multiply. Many of these projects are being initiated by PRC capital as megaprojects cast, across land and sea, to the Global South. As Alvin Lim, a political scientist of the Asian Pacific region, summarizes this PRC globalization dynamism and transnational expansion: “China is currently in its ‘new normal’ of single-digit growth, so its government has been very busy creating business opportunities for its industries across the world. In 2013 President Xi announced the ‘Silk Road Economic Belt’ and the ‘21st Century Maritime Silk Road,’ both of which involve transportation and energy megaprojects, especially things like high-speed rail [and transcontinental superhighways from the Atlantic to the Pacific across the Americas]. I suspect the Latin American projects will eventually be folded into the Maritime Silk Road.”⁶⁹ A regime fascinated by such resource-extraction agendas of global development, from islands in the South China Seas to post-Bandung Africa, is wreaking environmental damage down the Mekong and sideways to Southeast Asia and enforcing the derecognition of the island of Taiwan as a democratic nation-state or even as a commercial entity.⁷⁰ Remote islands subject to regimes of capitalist infrastructure, flow, and risk are not that remote.

Bill Knott warned, in a rebuke to Beat writers’ overdependence on fossil-fuel consumption to power their cross-country roads and fuel the “dharma bum” God quests across the massively industrializing planet: “Faster faster, never slow / on the road to ecocide.”⁷¹ Knott’s prophecy of “ecocide” goes unheeded from Beijing to Washington, DC, even when Pope Francis I is trying in neo-Franciscan terms of environmental empathy and stewardship to awaken the capitalist world system to ecological

consequences and class imbalances, as in overviews such as his 2015 encyclical letter *Laudato Si*: “We have forgotten that we ourselves are dust of the earth (cf. Gen. 2:7); our very bodies are made up of her elements, we breathe her air and we receive life and refreshment from her waters.”⁷²

Oceanic Becoming

Despite long-conjured odds of oceanic forgetting and obliviousness on urban pavements, “visa-free travel all the way to Hawai‘i” that had protested against the reign of the Berlin Wall in 1989 represents a freedom of movement, libidinal release, and mobile embodiment, called here a recurring dream of *oceanic becoming*. Along these lines of transformation and flight, “all the way to Hawai‘i” signified some utopic beach spot at the ends of the oceanic Earth. That was what the German demonstrators had longed for, mobilized, called forth, and dreamed. A beach might grow near Checkpoint Charlie. Admittedly, this Euro-Hawai‘i is remote, dreamy, and far-fetched, yet it abides as a kind of Pacific utopia (*no place*) that, nonetheless, a free citizen should be able to travel to—as if some belated distant isle of the blessed, as Friedrich Nietzsche evoked through his mentor rival, Richard Wagner. From the gold explorations of Spanish and Portuguese ships to the Great Merchant fortunes made by British, Dutch, and American ships traversing Asia and the Pacific, modern capitalism has linked its outreach to what the American philosopher George Santayana called “a poetic blue-water phase of commercial development” that may not so much have passed away as mutated in lyric power and utopic mode.⁷³

For the stability of the ocean as site of late capitalist weather remains perilous, fraught with risk, threatened with loss and death at every turn, as early portrayed (for example) in Shakespeare’s play *Merchant of Venice*, wherein Antonio’s “mind is tossing on the ocean” as he awaits the return of far-flung commodity ships (“rich lading wrecked on the narrow seas”) to the world maritime hub Venice: “He hath an argosy bound to Tripolis, another to the Indies . . . a third at Mexico, a fourth for England, and other investments he hath, squandered abroad” (act 1, scene 3), as Shylock mocks such transoceanic indebtedness to fortune. The sea—its currents, winds, waves, doldrums, storms—moving across overlapping circuits of exchange, from Shakespeare’s Mediterranean and Atlantic to Édouard Glissant’s “relational” Caribbean and Epeli Hau‘ofa’s *Pacific becoming Oceania*, is not just subject, topic, or background but a copresent trans-species

agent of world-making and world-breaking force. Boat and coffin, as Melville suggests through Queequeg's Polynesian coffin and the *Pequod's* deadly shipwreck in *Moby-Dick*, were often figured as interchangeable words in water-connected sites across Southeast Asia transiting the not-so-pacific Pacific. The Scottish fabulist Robert Louis Stevenson affirmed in *In the South Seas* (1896) that literature needed to connect islands and ocean across sites, such as Scotland to Samoa, as interwoven sites of conquest, settlement, commerce, creativity, and history: "I must learn to address readers from the uttermost parts of the sea." Oceanic becomes not just a content but a tactic and a mode of becoming, as I show in later chapters.

Lewis Lapham has documented (in an issue of *Lapham's Quarterly* devoted to iconography of "The Sea") recurring tropes, myths, and concepts of immensity and threat that tangle around the ocean. The poetics of the ocean long portrayed as *sublime*—as figured forth in writings from the Book of Jonah, epics of Homer, and aesthetics of Longinus through lyrical passages in Edmund Burke, Joseph Conrad, George Eliot, G. W. F. Hegel, Immanuel Kant, Melville, Eugene O'Neill, John Steinbeck, Simon Winchester, and more—stands corrected by the grimmer sciences of marine biology and ecology, tracing oceanscapes endangered by thermal alteration, environmental waste, fishing depletion, entropy, species death: sea waters "awash in non-biodegradable refuse—cathode-ray tubes, traffic cones, and polypropylene fishing nets."⁷⁴ This nonbiodegradable detritus, buried beneath pavements of overconsumption, disregard, and waste, is what Charles Moore has traversed and documented in the subtropical northern Pacific gyre as *Plastic Ocean*, which can "defeat even the most creative and voracious bacteria."⁷⁵ "At the very least, your days of eating Pacific Ocean fish are over," is how Gary Stamper puts this oceanic endangerment, tracking radioactive trace elements across the Pacific such as iodine, cesium, and strontium in the wake of the Fukushima nuclear meltdown, "20–30 times as high as the Hiroshima and Nagasaki nuclear bombings in 1945."⁷⁶

Disappearing from Maps

Still I pondered these Pacific Ocean dynamics inside the House of World Culture in Berlin 2013, city and land where Hegel had lectured on the capital-mobilizing power of oceans across state forms and world history (*Weltgeschichte*) in 1822; where Johann Wolfgang von Goethe had initiated reflection on the contours and system of "world literature" (*Weltliteratur*)

in 1827; and where Carl Schmitt had formulated the planetary “nomos” of earth and ocean as sublating path to global world-picture domination in 1942.⁷⁷ This Germanic Pacific was still being framed as some *void*, a long night, an invisible continent, remote, noncontiguous, libidinous, backward, erotic, exotic. In a survey of novels comprising the core forms and values of cultural capital and world making in Pascale Casanova’s Paris-concentric “world republic of letters,” Christian Thorne highlights “the near absence of concerted transoceanic novels [that] is one of our literary history’s oddest lacunae.”⁷⁸ The only Pacific-based work mentioned by Casanova is Keri Hulme’s *Bone People*, based less on Maori commitment to people, language, history, and place than is its postcolonial translation into her skewed world system as a work of modernist experimentation and transcultural borrowing from Europe.⁷⁹ It is not easy to remember the Nazi ocean of Schmitt or the will to American military-commercial of world oceans in Admiral Alfred Thayer Mahan, or even to picture the Anthropocene-threatened islands flung far across Pacific or Caribbean distances.⁸⁰

The Pacific Ocean under these German pavements more commonly can become romanticized into ethnographic exoticism as in the still admired texts of Otto E. Ehlers, whose *Samoa: Pearl of the South Seas* (1894) was being reprinted as a rediscovered signal of the German (post)colonial interest in the Pacific. Or it can be romanticized via a Berlin-based artist such as Emil Nolde, whose modern expressivism drew on masks, totems, and the polytheism of the South Pacific to energize or mutate his art after Paul Gauguin–like journeys (1913–14) into wilder places and signifying systems of alter-culture, from Papua New Guinea and Pacific islands to Japan. At Luna Park in Berlin during the late 1920s, splendid baths were constructed with artificial waves, as if to bring the ocean rhythms of the seashore inside the domesticated modernity of the German city.⁸¹ In Benjamin’s between-the-wars Berlin, this feeling of urban modernity luxuriating in its own stability “begins on the asphalt, for the breadth of the pavements is princely.”⁸² The oceans become just urban scenery, not interlinked world space.

The German artist and writer Judith Schalansky produced works that conjugate far-flung islands in *Atlas der abgelegenen Inseln* (*Atlas of Remote Islands*) by meditating on the un-homely fate of her native East Germany, cast from smallness and difference into utter oblivion on world maps: “Then I looked for my country: The German Democratic Republic. East Germans could not travel, only the Olympic Team were allowed beyond our borders. . . . It was pink and tiny as my smallest fingernail. . . . My love for atlases endured when a year later [1989] everything else changed: when

it suddenly became possible to travel the world, and the country I was born in disappeared from the map.”⁸³ Registering the long-standing European quest for planetary space and travel across oceans, Schalansky’s *Atlas of Remote Islands* researches the far-flung fate of fifty islands across the world, naming twenty-seven islands in the Pacific, from those of Alexander Selkirk (alias Robinson Crusoe) on the Juan Fernandez Islands of Chile in 1704 to the fate of Iwo Jima, in the Volcano Islands of Japan, during World War II, tied later to the image of New York firemen in September 11, 2001, “the summit of Suribachi reborn on Ground Zero” as she portrays.⁸⁴

All this would be subject to global disruption from above and from below, near and far—by Atlantic and Pacific wars and catastrophes on and beneath the pavements of death and destruction. Fritz Lang’s *Metropolis* (1927) foreshadowed such urban ruination through the dystopian figuration of a massive subterranean flood erupting from beneath gleaming Weimar pavements and the built-up prosperity of 2026 to engulf the class-ridden city of world modernity. The “modern unrest” attendant on “spatial expansion resulting from Atlantic seafaring and the discovery of the New World” becomes aggravated with the rise of Japan, the United States, and China as financial and maritime powers across the Pacific. To invoke *You Must Change Your Life*, as Sloterdijk summarizes this disruptiveness as a “spherical” fate under maritime-*cum*-financial regimes of neoliberal globalization, “The primary fact of the Modern Age is not that the earth revolves around the sun, but that money flows around the earth.”⁸⁵

Back from Berlin, I started writing and researching *Oceanic Becoming: The Pacific beneath the Pavements*, to evoke utopic projections of beaches and Hawai’i / the Pacific from Paris ’68 or Berlin ’89 and move beyond these entrenched tropes (“the void Pacific,” “the invisible continent,” and so on) into dystopic oceans under the Anthropocene. Beyond this, the goal is to excavate an ecopoetics and politics of oceanic becoming in contexts of planetary threat. While it may seem that the well-being, safety, and prosperity of cities from the Battery of New York to the containerized ports of Oakland, Liverpool, and Los Angeles are connected to oceans, this relationship between an urban and a maritime global nexus is occluded, ignored, bypassed—all still but hidden “beneath the pavements.” While working through this tactic of desublimated disclosure, I wanted to keep moving between city and region to world and globe, if only to channel Pacific-based obsessions scholarly and poetic that can make the prose informed about all of this. At times, we may have seemed to care more about the world entanglement of oceans, tropes, and regimes than many there did—or, at

least, we wanted, as cultural critics and poets of the “American Pacific,” to ponder the ocean more resonantly than as ethnographic romance, historical fable, or aesthetic foil. As Marc Shell elaborates, all but landlocked Germany has been long entangled in such oceanic connections, southward to the Mediterranean, or “*mare nostrum*” of Rome, and, all the more so in the wake of British maritime supremacy, northward to the Baltic and the North Sea, as sea routes to global power and imperial dominion. “Full like the sea is Germany’s power” became the call to recuperated rule.⁸⁶

A Forgotten Urban Embrace of Oceans

The Pacific Ocean here figures as *the sublime* in some double sense—miraculous and catastrophic, liberating and threatening—as if shuttling between utopic and dystopian affects, narratives, and images that would comprise or push toward the making of a “blue poetics.” On the one hand, “The Ocean [Is] Full of Bowling Balls,” to use J. D. Salinger’s metaphor for the danger, risk, treachery, strangeness, death, trauma, irregularity, and murderous power of the ocean in an unpublished short story by that name set in contexts of a New England childhood innocence. In his wry poem, “Any Fool Can Get into an Ocean,” Jack Spicer invokes an ironic rebuke to the ocean as inhuman space, estranged from any shared language with humanity: “Look at the sea otters bobbing wildly / Out in the middle of the poem.” Spicer’s solution reverts to a quasi-romantic one: “But it takes a Goddess / To get out of one [the Ocean].”⁸⁷ The ocean always recalls the Middle Passage and a history of catastrophes, as well as passages to transformation and redemption, as Claudia Rankine documents and enacts in *Citizen: An American Lyric* (2014): “No, it’s a strange beach; each body is a strange beach, and if you let in the excess emotion you will recall the Atlantic Ocean breaking on our heads.”⁸⁸

“What the Sea Throws Up at Vlissingen” (1983), Ginsberg’s poem cataloging industrial pollution in the North Sea, portrays the filth-flushing seas of the Netherlands—though, in these Anthropocene days, it might be set in the Pacific, as well:

Plastic & cellophane, milk cartons & yogurt containers, blue
& orange shopping bag nets
Clementine peels, paper sacks, feathers & kelp, bricks &
sticks,

Succulent green leaves & pine tips, waterbottles, plywood and
 tobacco pouches
 Coffee jartops, milkbottle caps, rice bags, blue rope, an old
 brown shoe, an onion skin
 Concrete chunks white pebbled, sea biscuits, detergent
 squeezers, bark and boards, a whisk-brush, a box top
 Formula A Dismantling Spray-can, a whole small brown
 onion, a yellow cup
 A boy with two canes walking the shore, a dead gull, a blue
 running shoe,
 A shopping bag handle, lemon half, celery bunch, a cloth
 net—
 Cork bottletop, grapefruit, rubber glove, wet firework tubes,
 Masses of iron-brown-tinted seaweed along the high water
 mark near the sea wall,
 A plastic car fender, green helmet broken in half, giant hemp
 rope knot, tree trunk stripped of bark,
 A wooden stake, a bucket, myriad plastic bottles, pasta Zara
 pack,
 A long gray plastic oil drum, bandage roll, glass bottle, tin can,
 Christmas pine tree
 A rusty iron pipe, me and my peepee.⁸⁹

Oceans as threatened across the spaces and times of the Anthropocene, Ginsberg's catalogue of ecological damage falls into an indifferent list of near and far waste, human and nature thrown up into nature-culture *garbage*. Ginsberg's affect is one of not joy or cruel optimism but lyric deflation, as sublime ocean turns into urbanscape of waste, filth, and oblivion we need to contend with as planetary citizens of cities generating this mess.⁹⁰ Maybe Boyan Slat, the twenty-three-year-old Dutch oceanic entrepreneur, is right: "To catch plastic [you have to] act like plastic," he says, as he constructs (with crowdsourced funding) sixty plastic-catching devices (concentrated in the northern Pacific to confront the Great Pacific Garbage Patch) in what is called operation Ocean Cleanup.⁹¹ Still, as Somerville has noted, while thinking through the Great Pacific Garbage Patch both as US waste matter and as uncanny metaphor for Pacific diasporas and marine life along shifting scales of continental invisibility and archipelagic interconnection, the "oceanic current [gyres] that produced

the garbage patch originally created another, more positive, archipelago—a concentration of plankton and other organisms” vital to life.⁹²

In the chapters that follow, after a summarizing discussion of concepts and tactics crucial to “worlding,” “migration,” and the making of a “blue ecopoetics” in literature and poetics in key sites where such urban disclosure and world remaking takes place, I will zoom in on the Pacific Rim cities of San Francisco, Seoul, Kaohsiung, and Honolulu as oceanic-landed and global-local urban sites where such issues and tactics can be enacted. Crucial remains the island space of Taiwan, oceanic, green, and global in some exemplary sense, as I have experienced since 1995, when I was sponsored as a National Science Council research professor at major universities in the cities of Hsinchu, Kaohsiung, Taipei, and Taichung. Students wonderfully remarked, when I discussed Taiwan as an oceanic space caught amid Mainland China, Oceania, Japan, and the world, that the map was not so much a “taro” shape as that of a “whale” about to sail off into the great blue Pacific Ocean. For world oceans, as the poet-scholar-translator Kenneth Rexroth said of his own lively San Francisco, both connect and separate, a configuration he saw connecting the coastal city of San Francisco to the “Orient” of poets such as Hanshan, Li Po, and Rabindranath Tagore, among others: “One reason is simply that oceans, like the steppes, unite as well as separate. The West Coast is close to the Orient. It’s the next thing out there. . . . San Francisco is an international city, and it has a living contact with the Orient.”⁹³

If dwelling in urban sites of organic farming and commitments to place that have spread across the Pacific Rim, oceanic citizens remain wary of becoming digital nomads in cities of the future. As the post-Beat African American experimental poet Tongo Eisen-Martin writes about the homeless-ridden streets of his home city of birth and death, San Francisco, and about a Pacific Ocean that at once surrounds the Bay Area city with a beckoning promise of blue immensity and locks its citizens into Blackness, service-job precarity, and abjection amid the urban confinement of joblessness, social failure, gentrifying displacement, police harassment, drug deaths, and crime on the pavements of urban blight in Hunter’s Point and the Tenderloin:

bet this ocean thinks it’s an ocean
but it’s not
it’s sixth and mission.⁹⁴

DUKE
UNIVERSITY
PRESS

If, as the title of Eisen-Martin's first poetry collection, *someone's already dead*, urges of his Black urban polity, the ocean and its fabled bounty of nourishment, renewal, life source, interconnection, and promise may die in this forgotten urban embrace from San Francisco to the world. "I've been out in front of a dozen dead oceans," Bob Dylan warned in "A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall," his catalogue of ominous ruinations from the album *The Freewheeling Bob Dylan* (1963).

Still, it takes some critical and poetic doing to reveal this occluded urban-planetary nexus of transience, motion, and affect, even as the aim in urban-situated chapters is to enact potentials of transfiguration across a range of forms and tactics here called *worlding poesis*.⁹⁵ These tactics will be not just historical and geopolitical but ecopoetic, cosmopolitical, and experimental to world, meaning here, at a destructive extreme, *to deworld*, as well as to creatively *reworld*, this planetary saltwater element of peril and promise; intimate presence; and nourishment, if not (still in urban pavement contexts from San Francisco to Hong Kong and Berlin) obliviousness. I foreground these creative-destructive energies at the oceanic and riverine core of late capitalist weather along the Pacific Rim. Not just city sites but land farmed for centuries along coastal edges of the ocean, from the Atlantic and the Pacific to the Indian Ocean, are being lost to the rising salt tides and saline watersheds of the world seas. Urban living along the ocean inside precarious coastal cities of the Pacific Rim and the Global South (such disappearing archipelagic islands as Tuvalu) is coming to reflect what Ackbar Abbas (situated in a Hong Kong returning to a PRC state) has theorized as the uncanny "déjà disparu" (already disappeared) temporality of biopolitical life vanishing from local sites and global sounds within the Anthropocene.⁹⁶

In *Oceanic Becoming: The Pacific beneath the Pavements*, I will build on the emergent regional framework called "Oceania" as a world-ocean frame of the interior Native Pacific peoples as theorized through an interconnected insular/archipelagic kind of thinking. I would also push "worlding poesis" (or world making as such) toward a utopic planetary way of projecting future space-time-world as an environmental horizon of comradely confederation in the interest of providing an ecopoetics to challenge the capitalist-driven telos of the Anthropocene—an endgame horizon that would abolish worlding tactics; concepts; and transfiguration of biopoetic belonging to the world at local, regional, and planetary scales.

Crossing sites within and along this coastal Pacific as linked to Oceania and "becoming oceanic," Oceania takes the lead in this transnational,

transpacific, and transoceanic mode of ecological belonging to world oceans. I build on the Pacific-based work of writers and poet-scholars such as Epeli Hau'ofa of Tonga, Fiji, and Papua New Guinea; Teresia Teiawa of the Kiribati Islands and Honolulu (as well as Santa Cruz and Christchurch, New Zealand); and the Native Hawaiian poet Joseph Puna Balaz, who goes on forging his pidginized I (“pidgin eye”) belonging to Oceania from the leeward coast of O’ahu and now from his diaspora in the US state of Ohio. I later invoke the musical and meaning-laden poetics of the last Hawaiian monarch, Queen Lili’uokalani, deposed by American settler forces in 1893, whose writings and songs encode her pleas for justice and her countermemory of nineteenth-century American history amid the “great powers” (*mana nui*) of the Pacific during her learned and cosmopolitan lifetime.

We are living the *deworlding* processes taking place across Asia Pacific, as elsewhere—meaning the dismantling of the ecological lifeworld threatened by multispecies endangerment, environmental destruction, extreme weather events, dismantled health plans and work regimes, resource plundering, global pandemics, and precariousness and cruelty taken as everyday norm. *Worlding*, at the core—as Donna Haraway, Anna Tsing, and Karen Barad, transdisciplinary colleagues at UC Santa Cruz in the environmental humanities and social sciences urge—would embody practices of *thickening* cultural-political and trans-species differences of resilient, care-driven, and sympathetic life survival on this planet. Instead of surrendering hope of change to this unmaking world, worlding can help to create other forms, possibilities, and values of world becoming, world making, and dwelling in the damaged world: aiming to *reworld the world* in some active, *gerundive* sense of remaking and healing local-planetary being that is not just beholden to capitalist temporality, pre-fabricated identity, or the regulated map grid of Mercatorian space as taken-for-granted horizon or urban life, diasporic crossing, and oceanic belonging.

DUKE

UNIVERSITY
PRESS

INTRODUCTION

NOTES

INTRODUCTION. PACIFIC BENEATH THE PAVEMENTS

Epigraph: Clover, *Red Epic*, 3.

- 1 For an intertextually informed approach to the “blue humanities” as embodied phenomenology of oceanic swimming and belonging to this planetary element, see Mentz, *Ocean*. See also his study of oceanic antagonism and commercial expansion in early modern contexts: Mentz, *Shipwreck Modernity*.
- 2 See Mentz, *Ocean*, 17. He writes on Melville’s indigenous Pacific hero Queequeg as an oceanic being of advanced skills and empathy in the chapter titled “Melville’s Aquaman” (95–102).
- 3 Weiss, “Driving the Beat Road.”
- 4 See Phelan, “Italy’s Plan to Save Venice from Sinking.”
- 5 See McHugh, “Poet Ferlinghetti Chased Subs in World War II.”
- 6 For a far-reaching study of the classical Mediterranean Ocean connecting Europe, Africa, and Asia, as later applied by Alexander von Humboldt to enframe and trope the archipelagic Caribbean region as “seas between lands” linked across the Americas, see Gillman, *American Mediterraneans*. Gillman writes, “As such, this oceanic concept, as much historical as ecological, offers a way to rethink comparative study three-dimensionally, through the axis of space, time, and language” (xvi).
- 7 See R. Ghosh, “Albatross Unbound.”

- 8 MacFarlane, “Marshland”; MacFarlane and Mitchell, “Hamburg’s Spaces of Danger.”
- 9 For the “heavy waters” of this nuclearized and militarized Pacific, as well as islands as spaces of environmental potentiality for “interspecies worlding,” see DeLoughrey, *Allegories of the Anthropocene*, chaps. 2, 4. On geopolitics riddling the Indo-Pacific with the rise of Global China, see Hendrix, “America’s Future Is at Sea.”
- 10 See Roberts, *Borderwaters*, 1–43.
- 11 Somerville, “The Great Pacific Garbage Heap as Metaphor,” 320.
- 12 Iglar’s *The Great Ocean* focuses on the eastern Pacific as a base for American-centered expansion. See also Huang, “Islands”; Shell, *Islandology*.
- 13 Hopkins, “The Blessed Virgin Compared to the Air We Breathe”; Wright, *Haiku*.
- 14 Probyn, *Eating the Ocean*, 2.
- 15 Probyn, *Eating the Ocean*, 38.
- 16 Haraway elaborates this cross-cutting process of “sympoiesis” via trans-species modes of “making-with” and creating yokes “for becoming-with” that proliferate multispecies “ongoingness” amid late-capitalist ruins: Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble*, 49, 58, 125. For desublimating formulations of “poison Apple” and its Silicon Valley nexus of labor to toxic hinterlands of China, see Litzinger, “The Labor Question in China.”
- 17 For a summary of this discursive transformation occurring over the past two decades, see Suzuki, “Transpacific.” See also C. Wang, *Transpacific Articulations*.
- 18 See Roberts and Stephens, *Archipelagic American Studies*, 1–4.
- 19 See Chan, “China Is Not Even Pretending Anymore in the South China Sea.”
- 20 See *Economic Times*, “US Pacific Command Renamed as US Indo-Pacific Command.” On the historical, cultural, and political formation challenges to this American Pacific, see Wilson, *Reimagining the American Pacific*.
- 21 *Economic Times*, “US Pacific Command Renamed as US Indo-Pacific Command.”
- 22 Hsu, *A Floating Chinaman*, 12, 238 (the “floating” metaphor).
- 23 For a creative-destructive portrayal of the Shanghai Global telos at the vanguard edge of a global Chinese future and the Pearl River delta contado, see Connery, “Better City, Better Life.”
- 24 Bernes, “Documents,” 82.
- 25 See Pentland, “Vast Freshwater Reserves Discovered under Ocean Floor, Scientists Say.”
- 26 Zanzibar B. Mcfate (@stonemirror) to the post-Adorno hypernihilist Eric Jarosinski (@NeinQuarterly), Twitter, posted October 19, 2014. The first version of this tweet, later translated into French, came from @NeinQuarterly in Paris from Berlin: “Under the paving stones: the beach. Under the beach: more paving stones. Under those paving stones: a street. Paved with beach.”

- 27 See Pendell, *Walking with Nobby*.
- 28 On this Haus der Kulturen der Welt event in 2013, as linked to eco-aesthetic museum and industrial site interventions in Germany, Sweden, and Australia, see Robin, “Three Galleries of the Anthropocene.”
- 29 See DeLoughrey, *Allegories of the Anthropocene*, chap. 4.
- 30 On the material history and allegorical trope of Tuvalu as disappearing world island, see DeLoughrey, *Allegories of the Anthropocene*, 178–90.
- 31 See Shanken, *Into the Void Pacific*. The catachresis of “the void Pacific” is taken from a letter of September 24, 1923, in which the British author D. H. Lawrence writes, “California is a queer place—in a way, it has turned its back on the world and looks into the void Pacific. It is absolutely selfish, very empty, but not false, and at least, not full of false effort”: quoted in Shanken, *Into the Void Pacific*, 7. The World’s Fair called for San Francisco to draw on Asian, the Pacific and Pacific Rim, and Latin American cultures (10, 25).
- 32 Wark, *The Beach beneath the Streets*.
- 33 Shepard and Smithsimon, *The Beach beneath the Streets*, 2.
- 34 Kim Stanley Robinson’s science-fiction *Three Californias* and *Mars* trilogies depicting the “Pacific edge” of endangered life on the planet has given this working definition of *Anthropocene*: “The idea that we’re living in the Anthropocene is correct. We are the biggest geological impact now; human beings are doing more to change the planet than any other force, from bedrock up to the top of the troposphere. Of course if you consider twenty million years and plate tectonics, we’re never going to match that kind of movement. It’s only in our own temporal scale that we look like lords of the Earth; when you consider a longer temporality, you suddenly realize we’re more like ants on the back of an elephant” (Robinson, “California: The Planet of the Future”). See also Demos, “Welcome to the Anthropocene!”
- 35 In “The Politics of Seeing with the Global City,” Nick Mirzoeff’s description shifts from “world city” locality to the “global city”: “In 2011, the world changed—statistically. For the first time, the majority of people worldwide lived in cities. That majority has already risen to 54% and is expected to reach 66% by 2050. What were previously known as ‘world cities’ during the era of high imperialism (1857–1945) depended on culture, trade, and war, following networks established by colonialism and directed by nation states. The global city is a metropolis whose primary relation is to other global cities, not to the nation where it is located. It is defined by its level of integration into the world-city network. From Shanghai to Johannesburg to New York, the global city has reconfigured itself ‘back to the future.’ It now looks more like 19th-century Paris than 1970s New York: a literally gilded center, epitomized by super tall buildings for the spectacularly wealthy, surrounded by extended zones of racialized hyper-segregation and poverty.”
- 36 See bloomsby, response to “What specific event caused the Berlin Wall to fall peacefully?” Fun Trivia website, March 24, 2004, archived June 2,

2008, at Archive.org, <https://web.archive.org/web/20080602160508/http://www.funtrivia.com/askft/Question45647.html>.

- 37 For a portrait of the artistic and political ferment in anarchistic, urban-experimental, and Punk do-it-yourself (DIY) squats and sites such as the Kirche von Unten (Church from Below) in East Berlin and West Berlin before and after 1989, see Hockenos, “Zero Hour.”
- 38 As quoted in Brislin, “On Berlin.”
- 39 See Nichols, *Blue Mind*, 20.
- 40 On this movement in the humanities, see Gillis, “The Blue Humanities.”
- 41 I allude to passages from Pendell, *Walking with Nobby*, in this study; see also Wilson, “Transfiguration as a World-Making Practice.”
- 42 I touch more thickly on these movements in chapter 7 and the epilogue.
- 43 For an embrace of urban tactics of global capitalist disruption such as the Oakland Port blockage and Occupy “riot” tactics more broadly, from Watts and Bay Area streets to Paris and Egypt, see Clover, *Riot. Strike. Riot*.
- 44 Shepard and Smithsimon, *The Beach beneath the Streets*, 3.
- 45 See Benjamin, *Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century*, 157.
- 46 Gonick, “Global Cities and Their Discontents.”
- 47 See Brown, “From Politics to Metapolitics”; Brown, *Love’s Body*, 234 (“To liberate [urban] flesh and blood from reification, overthrow the [government by capitalist] reality-principle.”).
- 48 See Miyoshi, *Trespases*, 184.
- 49 Miyoshi, “Turn to the Planet,” 286. On this environmental turn in Miyoshi’s later writings, see Marran, “The Planetary.”
- 50 Urbain, *At the Beach*, 118–19, 60.
- 51 See Teiwei’s frame-shattering essay on the nuclearized Pacific, “bikinis and other s/pacific n/oceans,” and her posthumous collection, *Sweat and Salt Water*.
- 52 “Hong Kong’s Taste for Seafood Putting Oceans in Danger.”
- 53 Mentz, *At the Bottom of Shakespeare’s Ocean*, 88.
- 54 The power of Jules Verne’s transoceanic visions of spatial adventure, in French literary works of expanded globality such as *Around the World in Eighty Days* (1872) and *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea* (1869), captivated Jean Cocteau’s childhood imagination. Cocteau later observed, “Play and book alike [by Verne] not only thrilled our young imagination but, better than atlases and maps, whetted our appetite for adventure in far lands. . . . Never for me will any real ocean have the glamour of that sheet of green canvas, heaved on the backs of the Chatelet stage-hands crawling like caterpillars beneath it, while Phileas and Passepartout from the dismantled hull watch the lights of Liverpool twinkling in the distance”: Cocteau, *Round the World Again in Eighty Days*, 1–2.
- 55 For thick-descriptive cultural-political studies of such phenomena and islander-based resistance, see Comer, *Surfer Girls in the New World Order*; Imada, *Aloha America*.

- 56 On the nuclear history and threat of rising ocean waters to the Marshall Islands, see the prescient eco-poetic collection, Jetnil-Kijiner, *Iep Jaltok*.
- 57 Lynas, *The God Species*, 5.
- 58 See Demick, “Malaysia Plane.”
- 59 See Urbina, “Sea Slaves.” As an example of “labor abuse at sea,” Urbina portrays this transnational oceanic laborer in the South China Sea: “Mr. [Lang] Long’s crews trawled primarily for forage fish, which are small and cheaply priced. Much of this catch comes from the waters off Thailand, where Mr. Long was held [by armed guards on a ‘shoddy wooden ship’], and is sold to the United States, typically for canned cat and dog food or feed for poultry, pigs and farm-raised fish that Americans consume.”
- 60 Marina Warner summarizes the hold of early modern cartographic images of oceans as monstrous sites in the fictions of world modernity, writing, “Moby-Dick, the giant squid and other sea monsters in Jules Verne, the Creature from the Black Lagoon, and even the computer-generated mask of glaucous, waving, suckered tentacles that the actor Bill Nighy is condemned to wear in the role of Davy Jones in *Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man’s Chest* reveal the near-indestructible longevity of the marine world picture [of oceans as monstrous sites] that was crystallized by early cartographic visionaries”: Warner, “Here Be Monsters.”
- 61 Stein, *Jung’s Map of the Soul*, 2, 9.
- 62 See Alaimo, “Violet-Black.”
- 63 Whitman’s poem can be read as one of the foundational American eco-poetic works: see Walt Whitman, “Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking,” in Fisher-Wirth and Street, *The Eco-poetry Anthology*, 4–9. Whitman’s will to American sublimity is connected to poem’s coming to terms with the oceanic grandeur and waste of the Atlantic. On such postwar American eco-poetics, see the far-ranging arguments on poetic address and trope in Ronda, *Remainders*.
- 64 Fisher-Wirth and Street, *The Eco-poetry Anthology*, 49.
- 65 Mentz, *At the Bottom of Shakespeare’s Ocean*, 18. Hereafter cited in the text.
- 66 See the essays in Cohen, *Prismatic Ecology*, esp. Tobias Menely and Margaret Ronda, “Red,” 22–41.
- 67 Sloterdijk, *Neither Sun nor Death*, 239. Brown links “ut unim sint” (that they become) mandates to overcome division from Freud, Marx, and Christ to urge “our union with the sea (Thalassa); oceanic consciousness; the unity of the whole cosmos as one living creature”: Brown, *Love’s Body*, 82.
- 68 See Sloterdijk, *In the World Interior of Capital*, 5.
- 69 Alvin Lim, comment to Rob Wilson, “Rethinking World Literature” group site, Facebook, June 27, 2015.
- 70 Here I draw on Facebook input from the China-affiliated cultural studies scholars Ralph Litzinger and Meagan Morris, the latter a colleague on the editorial board of the journal *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies* since the mid-1990s.

- 71 Bill Knott, "On the Road," in Knott, *The Unsubscriber*, 42.
- 72 Pope Francis I, *Laudato Si*.
- 73 Santayana, *Persons and Places*, 59.
- 74 Lapham, "The Sea," 20–21.
- 75 Moore, *Plastic Ocean*, 24.
- 76 See Stamper, "At the Very Least Your Days of Eating Pacific Ocean Fish Are Over."
- 77 See the legalistic arguments in Schmitt, *The Nomos of the Earth in the International Law of the Jus Publicum Europaeum*.
- 78 Thorne, "The Sea Is Not a Place, or Putting the World Back into World Literature," 74.
- 79 See Wilson, "World Gone Wrong."
- 80 See DeLoughrey, *Allegories of the Anthropocene*; Schmitt, *Land and Sea*.
- 81 Urbain, *At the Beach*, 295.
- 82 Benjamin, *Reflections*, 98.
- 83 Schalansky, *Atlas of Remote Islands*, 8.
- 84 Schalansky, *Atlas of Remote Islands*, 74, 112.
- 85 Sloterdijk, *You Must Change Your Life*, 319.
- 86 Shell, *Islandology*, 188–90.
- 87 Spicer, *My Vocabulary Did This to Me*, 23.
- 88 Rankine, *Citizen*.
- 89 Ginsberg, *Collected Poems*, 880.
- 90 Ginsberg, *White Shroud*.
- 91 Among the semi-skeptical endorsements and crowd-sourcing tactics, see Kilvert, "Great Pacific Garbage Patch Plastic Removal System Could Become 'World's Biggest Piece of Marine Debris,' Critics Say," 6.
- 92 Somerville, "The Great Pacific Garbage Patch as Metaphor," 331.
- 93 Meltzer, "Interview with Kenneth Rexroth, Summer 1969," 30.
- 94 Eisen-Martin, *Heaven Is All Goodbyes*, 15. See also Eisen-Martin, *someone's already dead*.
- 95 For an interspecies portrayal as transfigured into bio-unity across Oceania, see DeLoughrey, "Ordinary Futures."
- 96 Abbas, *Hong Kong*. See also Estok and Chou, "The City and the Anthropocene."

CHAPTER 1. BECOMING OCEANIA

Earlier versions of this chapter were presented as talks at the Remapping Transnational American Studies panel, Modern Language Association Annual Convention, Boston, January 6, 2013; at the Sea Changes: Mediterranean and Maritime Perspectives on History and Culture conference, UCSC, May 3, 2013; the Social Life of Poetic Language *boundary 2*

DUKE

UNIVERSITY
PRESS