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Slow Violence, Neoliberalism, and the Environmental Picaresque

It is only right, to my mind, that things so remarkable, which happen to have remained unheard and unseen until now, should be brought to the attention of many and not lie buried in the sepulcher of oblivion.

—Anonymous, *Lazarillo de Tormes*

A quarter century ago, Raymond Williams called for more novels that attend to “the close living substance” of the local while simultaneously tracing the “occluded relationships”—the vast transnational economic pressures, the labor and commodity dynamics—that invisibly shape the local.¹ To hazard such novels poses imaginative challenges of a kind that writers content to create what Williams termed “enclosed fictions” need never face, among them the challenge of rendering visible occluded, sprawling webs of interconnectedness. In our age of expanding and accelerating globalization, this particular imaginative difficulty has been cast primarily in spatial terms, as exemplified by John Berger’s pronouncement, famously cited in Edward Soja’s *Postmodern Geographies*: “Prophecy now involves a geographical rather than a historical projection; it is space and not time that hides consequences from us. To prophesy today it is only necessary to know men [and women] as they are throughout the world in all their inequality.”²

Yet the legitimate urgency of spatial prophecy should not, in turn, distract us from the critical task—especially for environmental writers—of finding imaginative forms that expose the temporal dissociations that permeate the age of neoliberal globalization. To this end, *Animal's People*, Indra Sinha's fictional reworking of the Bhopal disaster, offers a powerful instance of a writer dramatizing the occluded relationships of transnational space together with time's occlusions. Sinha's novel stands (to adapt Williams's phrase) as a work of "militant particularism," yet it discloses through that radical particularity temporal and spatial webs of violence on a vast scale.³ Sinha's approach to the aftermath of the catastrophic gas leak at Union Carbide's Bhopal factory in December 1984 throws into relief a political violence both intimate and distant, unfolding over time and space on a variety of scales, from the cellular to the transnational, the corporeal to the global corporate. *Animal's People* can be read as a novel of risk relocation, not just in Susan Cutter's spatial sense but across time as well, for the transnational off-loading of risk from a privileged community to an impoverished one changes the temporal topography of fear in the long term.

The power of *Animal's People* flows largely from Sinha's single-handed invention of the environmental picaresque.⁴ By creatively adapting picaresque conventions to our age, Sinha probes the underbelly of neoliberal globalization from the vantage point of an indigent social outcast. His novel gives focus to three of the defining characteristics of the contemporary neoliberal order: first, the widening chasm—within and between nations—that separates the megarich from the destitute; second, the attendant burden of unsustainable ecological degradation that impacts the health and livelihood of the poor most directly; and third, the way powerful transnational corporations exploit under cover of a free market ideology the lopsided universe of deregulation, whereby laws and loopholes are selectively applied in a marketplace a lot freer for some societies and classes than for others.

A neoliberal ideology that erodes national sovereignty and turns answerability into a bewildering transnational maze makes it easier for global corporations like Union Carbide to sustain an evasive geopolitics of deferral in matters of environmental injury, remediation, and redress. Thus, among the many merits of Sinha's novel is the way it gives imaginative

definition to the occluded relationships that result both from slow violence and from the geographies of concealment in a neoliberal age.

Slow Violence, Chernobyl, and Environmental Time

Maintaining a media focus on slow violence poses acute challenges, not only because it is spectacle deficient, but also because the fallout's impact may range from the cellular to the transnational and (depending on the specific character of the chemical or radiological hazard) may stretch beyond the horizon of imaginable time. The contested science of damage further compounds the challenge, as varied scientific methodologies may be mobilized to demonstrate or discount etiologies, creating rival regimes of truth, manipulable by political and economic interests. Moreover, the official dimensions of the contaminated zone may shrink or dilate depending on which political forces and which research methodologies achieve the upper hand. What emerges, then, is a contest over the administration of difference between those who gain official recognition as sufferers and those dismissed as nonsufferers because their narratives of injury are deemed to fail the prevailing politico-scientific logic of causation; or for that matter, because they lack the political contacts to gain admission to the inner circle of certified sufferers and thus to potential compensation. These unstable, complex procedures—and hierarchies—of toxic recognition may create novel forms of biological citizenship, as in the long aftermaths of the 1984 Bhopal disaster and the 1986 Chernobyl explosion.⁵

The varieties of biological citizenship that emerged in the aftermaths of Bhopal and Chernobyl were distinct in certain ways, as were the media responses. Chernobyl received far more sustained attention in the Western media for several reasons. First, because of Chernobyl's proximity to Western Europe, it was perceived as an ongoing transnational threat to "us" rather than a purely national threat that could be imaginatively contained as an Indian problem, over there among the faceless poor of the third world. Moreover, during the rise of Reagan's and Thatcher's neoliberal orders, Chernobyl could be directly assimilated to the violent threat that communism posed to the West, a threat that increased calls for heightened militarization and, ironically, for further corporate and environmental deregulation in the name of free-market forces. Bhopal, by contrast,

was easier to dissociate from narratives of global violence dominated by a communist/anticommunist plotline, thus obscuring the free-market double standards that allowed Western companies to operate with violent, fatal impunity in the global South. Indeed, Warren Anderson (then Union Carbide's chairman), company lawyers, and most of America's corporate media argued in concert that blame for the disaster was local not transnational in character, ignoring the fact that in the run up to the disaster, the parent company had slashed safety procedures and supervisory staff in an effort to staunch hemorrhaging profits.⁶

In reading *Animal's People* as, among other things, an exposé of these neoliberal double standards, we can recognize Khaupfur as both specific and nonspecific, a fictional stand-in for Bhopal, but also a synecdoche for a web of poisoned communities spread out across the global South: "The book could have been set anywhere where the chemical industry has destroyed people's lives," Sinha observes. "I had considered calling the city Receio and setting it in Brazil. It could just as easily have been set in Central or South America, West Africa or the Philippines."⁷

Chernobyl occurred three years before the Soviet Union's dissolution in 1989, which was also the year John Williamson coined the term "the Washington Consensus" to describe the prevailing ideology that united the World Bank, the IMF, and the U.S. Treasury Department around the preconditions for "development aid" to nations in the global South.⁸ The developmentalist, neoliberal ideology of the Washington Consensus became a crucial foreign policy wing of what George Soros would term "market fundamentalism," a broad crusade that would continue to gather force amid the postcommunist ideological uncertainty through demands for deregulation, privatization, and the hacking back of government social programs and safety nets. It was in this neoliberal context that, ultimately, the ailing survivors of both Bhopal and Chernobyl would find themselves sinking or swimming.

From a temporal perspective, the Chernobyl disaster of April 26, 1986, was distinguished by an initial catastrophic security lapse followed by a series of time lapses. The initial catastrophe was spectacular but, in media terms, deferred: eighteen days passed before Mikhail Gorbachev appeared on TV to acknowledge the explosion.⁹ Had the Soviet government dispensed nonradioactive iodine pills during that lost time, it could

have averted the epidemic of thyroid cancers that only began, en masse, four years later at the time of the breakup of the Soviet Union and the emergence of a Ukraine that was officially independent yet bound in environmental, epidemiological, and consequently economic terms to the Soviet-era nuclear disaster.

The different timelines of mutation—international, intranational, intergenerational, bureaucratic, and somatic—are dizzying even to attempt to map. The prevailing winds carried the radiation plume north over Belarus, across eastern, western, and northern Europe, and beyond. Over time, through toxic drift, the national epicenter of the catastrophe would shift so that Belarus, not Ukraine, would become the country most pervasively polluted.¹⁰ In both countries, radiochemical poisoning coursed through air, water, soil, crops, meat, and mother's milk at divergent speeds. Some symptoms manifested themselves relatively quickly, others appeared most dramatically among children born a decade or more after the disaster struck. The stratified slow violence of the fallout was compounded by the tardiness of the Soviet authorities, whose reflex response was foot-dragging, equivocation, and denial.

Adriana Petryna's anthropological work on post-Soviet Ukraine persuasively demonstrates the complex entanglements between environmental fallout and the socioeconomic fallout of being classified as a sufferer or nonsufferer. Compensation for Chernobyl injuries that rendered a citizen an official sufferer might be a mere \$5 per month. But after Washington Consensus-style market liberalization was imposed on Ukraine in 1992, hyperinflation and mass unemployment followed, creating a sudden chasm between economic survivors and economic casualties.¹¹ In this neoliberal context, official recognition as a Chernobyl sufferer-survivor—and the modest government compensation that ensued—could make the difference between subsistence and starvation for a whole family.¹² The onus of proof fell on Ukrainians to develop, over time, an intimate expertise that was both bodily and bureaucratic. Which symptoms counted and which were discounted by the state? What work history in which officially recognized affected areas (and for how long) would strengthen one's claim for the imprimatur of sufferer? Which doctors, lawyers, and bureaucrats could accelerate one's efforts to enter that inner circle? How could one meet such influential people? Did they need to be bribed?

The ground rules for being counted and discounted kept changing. Even the boundaries of the pollution zones were unstable, shrinking and dilating through a mixture of bureaucratic caprice, economic expediency, and slippery science. So the system required energetic, up-to-date proactivism on the part of Ukraine's biocitizens as they scrambled to avoid plummeting into economic free fall. A key survival strategy was to fit their life stories, their self-narrations, into the limited generic narratives of suffering that possessed a state mandate from which a small stream of compensation might flow. New categories of identity emerged that—in other societies, in other times—might have remained confined to the domain of private medical records. Instead, a Ukrainian might introduce herself, position herself publicly, by announcing, "I am a mother of a child who is a sufferer. I am an evacuee from Zone Two. My husband is a Chernobyl worker, Category One."¹³

Foreign Burdens: Chernobyl, Bhopal, and *Animal's People*

Within ten days of the Chernobyl explosion, the Soviet authorities had mobilized thousands of Ukrainian coal miners to help with remediation work at the disaster site. One of them, Dmytro, who labored at the site for a month, was later afflicted with pulmonary, cerebral, and cardiac disorders and found to have chromosomal aberrations. In an interview, he portrayed his body's radiation load as a "foreign burden."¹⁴ He was referring—as his interviewer notes—to the sense of harboring an alien, unnatural, and disquieting force within.

But the miner's choice of phrase deserves a second parsing, one directly pertinent to my reading of *Animal's People*. Dmytro had been saddled, I would argue, with a "foreign burden" not just in a somatic but in a geotemporal sense as well: his post-Soviet Ukrainian body remained under occupation by a Soviet-era catastrophe. For in the case of Chernobyl, not only did the radiological toxicity travel across the national border, but (as the Soviet Union fragmented) the national border traveled across the toxicity. The Ukrainian body politic, though politically autonomous, remained environmentally and epidemiologically dominated by the "foreign burden" of a ghosted country, by a Soviet past that (as Faulkner would have it) was not even past. Through the workings of slow violence across environmental

time, Ukraine's sovereignty was compromised. If the Ukrainian body politic at large was afflicted with the burden of involuntary macro memory, mutagenic chromosomes at the micro level sustained a Soviet heritage that prompted Dmytro (and many compatriots) to refuse to reproduce for fear of a future burdened by an afflicted Ukrainian child.

The concept of the foreign burden offers a productive prism through which to approach Sinha's novelistic response to the Union Carbide disaster when, one early December night, a cloud of methyl isocyanate gas (in combination with other toxins) leaked from the company's pesticide factory in Bhopal. Estimates of those killed immediately vary wildly, from 4,000 to 15,000 people. In the years that followed, scores of thousands of deaths and life-threatening disabilities were linked to exposure to the gas cloud. By some estimates, 100,000 residents continue to be afflicted.¹⁵

Although *Animal's People* is set twenty years after the disaster, the novel dramatizes the illusion of the singular event: from a narrative perspective, the events—like the poisons themselves—are suspended in medias res, in a state of environmental, epidemiological, political, and legal irresolution. If the unfolding of slow violence across environmental time is typically managed through powerful strategies of distantiation, in Sinha's novel those distancing strategies depend primarily, in geographical terms, on transnational corporate distance and, in temporal terms, on both the slow emergence of morbidity and on legal procrastination, which provide prevaricative cover for the CEOs who wish to exploit time to defuse the claims of the afflicted. Khaufpur (Sinha's fictional Bhopal) is the "world capital of fucked lungs"; it is also a place of interminable trials—bodily and legal.¹⁶

For twenty years the immiserated people of Khaufpur have been trying to bring the American CEOs of the corporation responsible—named simply as the "Kampani"—to stand trial in India. Thirteen judges have come and gone in successive trials, but the spectral Kampani bosses keep failing to materialize, maintaining their oceanic distance from a city infiltrated and haunted by Kampani poisons. Playing for time, the Kampani resorts to legal chicanery, political bribery, and backroom deals with India's Minister for Poison Affairs and his colleagues. What emerges, then, is a contest between the tenacity of corporeal memory and the corrosive power, over time and space, of corporate amnesia emboldened by a neoliberal regime of deregulation.

If Chernobyl's "foreign burden" is an inheritance from an evaporated empire, we may read Khaufpur's burden rather differently as the weight of absentee corporate colonialism, whereby transnational companies internalize profits and externalize risks, particularly in impoverished regions of the global South. However, as a novelist, Sinha cannot afford to be this explicitly polemical. An observation by the Irish writer Eavan Boland is pertinent to the novelistic challenges Sinha must negotiate: "If the voice of a character in a fiction speaks too clearly with the anger and hindsight of an ethical view of history, then the voice may be made louder by argument but grow less convincing through being less imagined. Then both humanity and history can be sentimentalized."¹⁷ Because novels about slow violence suffer from a drama deficit, they risk resorting to sentimentality and political moralizing as substitutes for arresting spectacle and narrative tension. For these reasons some critics, like Anthony Lane, have gone so far as to assert that "eco-drama . . . is a contradiction in terms."¹⁸

Sinha astutely negotiates this ethical and dramatic minefield without compromising his novel's political energies. He does so by devising a narrator who is at best ambivalent toward the pursuit of justice, yet whose physical form serves as a bodily shorthand for Khaufpur's transnational plight. Through a literal twist of fate—a toxic corkscrewing of his spine—Animal morphed at the age of six from an upright boy into a creature reduced to going around on all fours.¹⁹ When four-footed Animal (now nineteen) transports an ailing child on his back, his posture is precisely that of a beast of burden. Thus the symbolic economy of Animal's body affords Sinha an implicit yet unforgettable image of a body politic literally bent double beneath the weight of the poisoned city's foreign load.

By making an occluded economic relationship physically manifest through his narrator's body, Sinha thus ingeniously resolves the dilemma that Williams posed: how to give a novel a local materiality while exposing the web of transnational forces that permeate and shape the local. In the process, Sinha engages a temporal question that Williams did not specifically address: how do you dramatize the costs of uneven development when their delayed effects are intimate but their genesis is far-off in time?

Animal's People stages a simultaneous inquiry into the border zones between human and animal and the economic boundaries between rich and poor, the ever-deepening, dehumanizing chasm that divides those

who can act with impunity and those who have no choice but to inhabit intimately, over the long term, the physical and environmental fallout of actions undertaken by distant, shadowy economic overlords. What does it mean, the novel asks, to belong to the same species—in biological, existential, ethical, and economic terms?

[To view this image, refer to
the print version of this title.]

Figure 2 Photograph of “Animal” sculpture. Reproduced by permission of the artist and photographer, Eleanor Stride.

Orphaned when the Kampani explosion killed both his parents, Animal has little truck with the niceties of belonging. His familial isolation, physical difference, and moral disgust at human inhumanity combine to set him apart. Despite his singularity, however, Animal also serves as a symbolic condensation of the vast army of the economically orphaned, abandoned to their fate by the merciless logic of the neoliberal marketplace.

Animal is a foundling who has morphed into a posthuman changeling, a one-of-a-kind creature spawned by a kind of chemical autochthony. Marooned in the present, Animal views himself as a four-footed species without precedent or the prospect of progeny, the alpha and omega of his kind. We can read him as a new beginning, which (in keeping with the novel's apocalyptic tenor) doubles as the end of time.

Animal has forgotten his childhood human name: it's as remote, as inaccessible as his city's culturally rich, prelapsarian, pretoxic past. From the moment children at the orphanage taunt him for walking like an animal, he embraces the name of his alienation and abasement, scoffing at those, like Zafar (the slum's chief anti-Kampani activist), who suggest that he is not a beast just an "especially abled" human.²⁰ The catastrophe that has befallen Khaufpur, imposing on the city a radically changed culture of nature, has in the process converted Animal into a figure who insists, "I've no choice but to be unnatural."²¹

His refusal of the natural is redolent of the stance adopted by Chernobyl's self-declared "biorobots" who, through hazardous exposure, inhabited a related gray zone between the human and the posthuman.²² Four months after the initial Chernobyl explosion, the Soviet authorities sent in robots to remove radioactive debris; when off-the-charts radiation levels rendered the robots dysfunctional, young men were conscripted to replace them. The men recognized they were being treated not as human employees but as "biological resources to be used and thrown out. . . . [S]lated for bio-robotic death."²³ As the Ukrainian director of the Ministry of Health declared, "no one has ever defined the value of a human here."²⁴ In this context, it is understandable that the young men would insist on their indeterminate status, not as human citizens, but as biorobots destined for the scrap heap of expendable parts. Like Animal, whose humanity was subject to a hostile foreign takeover, the biorobots exemplified the dissolution of the boundaries of their humanity through the slow, corrosive violence of environmental catastrophe.

The Environmental Picaresque, Abjection, and the Urban Poor

Animal joins a long line of picares: canny, scheming social outliers governed by unruly appetites, potty-mouthed and scatologically obsessed, often orphaned outcasts who, drawn from polite society's vast impoverished margins, survive by parasitism and by their wits. The picaro is the abject from which the body and the body politic cannot part. Stigmatized as aberrant and filthy, the picaro embodies everything the socially remote privileged classes, with their ornate rhetoric and social etiquette, seek to contain, repress, and eject. But the picaro keeps resurfacing as a discomfiting reminder of the limits to the social barriers and the studied amnesia that elite society strives to uphold.²⁵ Julia Kristeva's formulation of the abject thus offers a productive analytic frame for *Animal's People*, a picaresque novel about the dissociative rituals of a neoliberal transnationalism determined to disown, across time and space, the toxic repercussions innate to its practices, repercussions that will return to haunt it.²⁶

Sinha's poisoned picaro embodies—at a somatic and a transnational level—the conditions under which, in Kristeva's terms, “the subject finds the impossible within.”²⁷ The unsettling confrontation with the abject entails facing “those fragile states where man strays on the territories of animal.”²⁸ This confrontation with stray territory results in repeated efforts to cast out the threatening traces of animalism from the culture. If we associate abjection with the rupturing of systemic order and sealed identity from within, then Sinha has created in his picaresque *Animal* a potent compression of disturbing, porous ambiguity, a figure whose leakiness confounds the borders between the human and the nonhuman as well as the borders between the national and the foreign. His presence exposes the limits of disownership: he is an irrepressible, abject reminder of that from which the Kampani—however far off it may seem—can never fully part.

Since the Spanish Golden Age, the picaresque has posed questions about the class and gender politics of crime, contrasting the narrator's peccadilloes with the weightier crimes that society's overlords commit and from which they are structurally exonerated. This passion for interrogating the hypocrisies of criminality—above all, the inequitable definitions of crime—makes the picaresque a promising fit with the priorities of the environmental

justice movement. Sinha, in repurposing the picaresque, brings into brilliant focus the environmental, epidemiological, and economic fallout of the terrors that transnational neoliberal lawlessness dispenses in cahoots with corrupt, legally immune local politicians.

The picaresque emerged between 1550 and 1559 in the Spanish Golden Age as a countergenre, a reminder that, for all the infusion into Spain of transatlantic imperial wealth, the great majority of Spaniards remained deeply poor.²⁹ The genre—most famously in *Lazarillo de Tormes*—was countergeneric in tone as well, rich in bawdy street argot that clattered, in subversive counterpoint, against Spanish as imperial language and against the attendant ascendancy of classical literary forms. The picaresque thus inserted itself into a historical moment when a chasm was opening between the exalted, gluttonous classes with their linguistic refinements and perfumed pretensions and the indigent masses for whom life was an hourly scramble for survival. As in our own age of ballooning CEO golden parachutes soaring above a planet of the slums, the picaro achieves a particular potency as a marginal literary figure, a seldom-heard voice, who belongs nonetheless to the statistical majority. His or her existence depends on quick-witted improvisation coupled to expedient parasitism. As such, the picaro survives, in Michel Serres's fine phrase, as a "tactician of the quotidian."³⁰

Within the genre's comedic arc, the picaro typically pursues a quest of upward mobility; in *Animal's* case that quest becomes an elaborate pun subverting any ethical correlation between moral and physical erectness.³¹ He is witheringly dismissive of the artistry with which humans—most notably those in power—perform spectacles of rectitude. From his vantage point on humanity, *Homo* looks neither *sapiens* nor *erectus*, but a morally debased species whose uprightness is mostly posturing. *Animal's* bent posture, by contrast, embodies a crushing neoliberal, transnational economic relationship and also marks him as a literal "lowlife," a social and anatomical outlier whose physical form externalizes the slow violence, the unhurried metastases coursing through the community. His penumbral human/posthuman identity places a constant strain on the idea of limits (environmental, economic, ethical, and biological).³² In refusing the tainted designation "human," *Animal* remains for most of the novel defiantly otherwise. What one witnesses, then, is Sinha adaptively carrying

forward what Giancarlo Maiorino has termed “the antihumanist core of the picaresque.”³³

Together, the antihumanist and parodic strains that permeate the picaresque help Sinha ward off three threats to the dynamism of fictional eco-drama: predictability, sentimentality, and a political outrage or self-righteousness that supplants depth of character. Animal, like most picaros, is not expressly political; he positions himself at an angle to Khaupfur’s environmental justice movement and for much of the novel is more troubled by his tenacious virginity than by the toxic tenacity of his environment. Yet, as a product of that environment and as a denizen of the community of the poisoned abject, Animal poses profound questions about the limits and value of the human. He does so, however, not from some concern with abstract justice but from inside the highly unpredictable business of holding body and soul together at street level.

Paradoxically, Animal appears as unique but not exceptional: in his singularity he serves as a synecdoche for the spectrum of mutations to which Khauppuris have been subjected over time, ranging from the celebrated singer with now-ravaged lungs to the chatty Kha-in-a-jar, a double-headed bottled fetus that envies Animal his external, unbottled freedoms.³⁴ Unmistakably hypervisible, Animal is also by turns undetectable, passing beneath human eye level in a crowd, allowing him to slip porously, in the picaresque manner, between different social strata.

But there are spatial limits to how far he can venture in his infiltrations and exposes. In a masterstroke, Sinha’s deploys Animal’s physical form as not just a consequence but a condensation of occluded transnational economic relations. His picaro is literally outlandish, his twisted body the physical manifestation of extraterritorial, offshore capitalist practices. The novel tracks the economics of a transnational regime of contamination by posing questions about the limits to bodily integrity, in both the individual and the nation-state. The Kampani’s factory is located yet dislocated, inside India geographically yet elusively afloat, outside the reach (or at least the application) of Indian law. A novel narrated by a human animal—“a beastly boy”—bent out of shape by his foreign load simultaneously questions other forms of mutability, not least the plasticity of ownership, how foreign corporate practices inside India can be owned (for short-term profit) and disowned (for long-term consequences to environmental and human health).³⁵ To return

this dissociative economic logic to a somatic language, we come to see the Kampani as both incorporated and unincorporated into the national body. The Kampani is so compendious, so omnipresent in its effects yet so visibly absent that, at one point, Zafar (leader of Khaufpur's campaign for justice) declares the Kampani's faceless power to be eternal. In that despairing moment, we're given a fused nightmare of neoliberal corporate immunity and corporate immortality.

The picaresque proves uncannily effective at dramatizing another critical dimension to the environmentalism of the urban poor—their relationship to time. Like the picaro, the environmentally embattled slum dwellers are hell-bent on immediate survival, improvising from day to day, from hour to hour. Their temporal element is “now o'clock,” their lives subject to the fickle tyranny of the eternal today.³⁶ Yet collectively, the city's environmentally afflicted are bound in complex ways to past and future through the metamorphoses wrought by toxicity, the pursuit of social justice, and their collective relationship to apocalyptic time. The environmental picaresque of *Animal's People* pivots on two apocalypses: the horrors of “that night” when the interminable narrative of poisoning began and the certainty that over the long haul, as the activist Zafar insists, the poor possess “the power of zero.”³⁷ Global geopolitics may in the short term be skewed against them, but time is on their side: the Kampani has everything to fear from those with nothing to lose. Animal insists as much in the novel's closing lines: “All things pass, but the poor remain. We are the people of the Apokalis. Tomorrow there will be more of us.”³⁸ Animal's final words uncannily echo the end of *Planet of the Slums*, Mike Davis's powerful account of the contemporary neoliberal shantytown world from which, implicitly, the contemporary picaro emerges. “If the empire can deploy Orwellian technologies of repression,” Davis warns, “its outcasts have the gods of chaos on their side.”³⁹

Reflecting on Hurricane Katrina, Michael Eric Dyson writes memorably of “the color of disaster” as integral to the “neoliberal neglect” that has plagued American politics for over twenty years.⁴⁰ In keeping with Dyson's stance, we can refuse the unsustainable divide between human disasters (like Bhopal and Chernobyl) and natural ones (like Katrina), dissociating ourselves, for example, from former president George W. Bush's insistence that “the storm didn't discriminate and neither will the recovery effort.”⁴¹

Discrimination predates disaster: in failures to maintain protective infrastructures, failures at pre-emergency hazard mitigation, failures to maintain infrastructure, failures to organize evacuation plans for those who lack private transport, all of which make the poor and racial minorities disproportionately vulnerable to catastrophe. As investigative Indian reporters, writing for publications like the *Hindustan Times* and *Statesmen* were quick to reveal, the Union Carbide disaster was preceded by a long history of structural neglect and a reckless flouting of elementary safety measures.⁴²

If we project Dyson's national "color of disaster" onto a transnational screen, his phrase can be seen—like Animal's apocalyptic final words—to point backward to global crimes of environmental racism (that treat certain communities as more expendable than others) and forward as a global portent. The poor of the world are the uncontainable color of a future that cannot be held in check. Yet there is another way to read that future, as a wager—however idealistic—to those in power to embrace the project of more equitable risk distribution, within the nation and beyond. The South African writer Njabulo Ndebele puts this case most forcefully:

We are all familiar with the global sanctity of the white body. Wherever the white body is violated in the world, severe retributions follow somehow for the perpetrators if they are non-white, regardless of the social status of the white body. The white body is inviolable, and that inviolability is in direct proportion to the vulnerability of the black body. This leads me to think that if South African whiteness is a beneficiary of the protectiveness assured by international whiteness, it has an opportunity to write a new chapter in world history. . . . Putting itself at risk, it will have to declare that it is home now, sharing in the vulnerability of other compatriot bodies. South African whiteness will declare that its dignity is inseparable from the dignity of black bodies.⁴³

Three points are worth underscoring here. First, that international whiteness provides a second shield for national whiteness, a protective dynamic that has profound consequences for the way slow violence has unfolded across the global stage in a neoliberal age. Second, and relatedly, the internal distance between the inviolable body and the vulnerable body is widened

by being routed through international circuits of power. Third, implicit in Ndebele's racial narrative of violation and retribution is the kind of environmental narrative that Sinha's novel tells, whereby a corporate bastion of white power deploys a battery of distancing strategies (temporal, legalistic, geographical, scientific, and euphemistic) in the *longue durée* between the initial catastrophe and the aftermath. Through this battery of attritional, dissociative mechanisms, the transnational corporation strives to wear down the environmental justice campaigns that seek compensation, remediation, and restored health and dignity. Under cover of a variety of temporal orders, the company can hope that public memory and demands for restitution will slowly seep out of sight, vanishing into the sands of time.⁴⁴

Yet the open-ended politics of catastrophic procrastination do not operate in isolation within the corporate realm. What of the roles of the state and science? If Ndebele exhorts the state to "jealously and vigorously protect all bodies within its borders and beyond," he acknowledges this has seldom been the case.⁴⁵ In Khaufpur the Chief Minister and the Minister for Poison Affairs, their palms well greased with bribes, provide local cover for the American Kampani while going through the motions of taking seriously the concerns of exposed locals.

The role of science is more complex. In Khaufpur—as in Bhopal—the transnational corporation withheld from the afflicted community details about the chemical composition of the insecticides it was producing at the site, profoundly weakening remedial prospects by denying those exposed precise scientific information. Small wonder that, when an American doctor arrives to open a free clinic in Khaufpur, local activists mount a boycott, viewing her as an agent of tendentious Kampani science—science whose long-term remit is to generate a circular narrative that will confirm the larger narrative of corporate self-exculpation or, at the very least, oil the machinery of doubt. From this skeptical perspective, the scientific process, like the legal one, provides further temporal camouflage, ostensibly uncovering what happened while deferring and occluding any decisive, actionable narrative.

Terror Time and Shadow Kingdoms

Khaufpur, translated from the Urdu, means "city of terror."⁴⁶ The city's poorest denizens inhabit a different terror time from the terror time projected

by the Kampani. When the slum-dwellers rise up nonviolently to protest the Kampani's inaction, the Kampani, invoking the fallback international rhetoric of terrorism, demands that the protestors be tried in the very Indian courts the company itself has been evading. Back in America, the Kampani engages in corporate antiterrorist training exercises, staging mock abductions and executions of their employees by Khaufpuri "terrorists."⁴⁷ Khaufpuris, by contrast, face a clear and present danger of an environmental kind: an immanent and imminent terror, faceless yet physically intimate, percolating through the penumbral time of the aftermath that is also the suspended time of the illimitable in-between.

We all inhabit multiple temporal orders that often coexist in frictional states, shifting and sliding like tectonic plates. The predominance—and our awareness of—some temporal orders as opposed to others is shaped by where and how we live. We need to ask how directly, how forcefully a given community is impacted by the cycles of sun and moon; by ebbing and flowing tides; by shifts in the seasons, stars, and planets; by the arrivals and departures of migratory life; and by climate change in ways that are crosshatched with the migratory cycles of transnational capital, electoral cycles (local, national, and foreign), digital time, and the dictates of sweatshop time. Sinha hints at, for example, the unpredictable interface between digital and seasonal time when Animal discovers the "internest" on a computer.⁴⁸ We can gloss his malapropism as fusing different ecologies of time: the "internest" is, after all, where images go to breed.

Animal's People exposes the uneven timelines and multiple speeds of environmental terror: the initial toxic event that kills thousands instantly; the fatal fire that erupts years later, when the deserted but still-polluted factory reignites; the contaminants that continue to leach into the communal bloodstream; and the monsoon season that each year washes abandoned chemicals into the aquifers, re-poisoning wells and producing new cycles of deferred casualties. Thus the initial airborne terror morphs into a waterborne terror that acquires its own seasonal rhythms of heightened risk.⁴⁹

Ordinarily, rural subsistence communities—"ecosystem people"—are attuned (and vulnerable) to different ecologies of time from those that impact the lives of the urban poor.⁵⁰ This is not to suggest that ecosystem people possess some romantic, timeless, organic bond to the pulse of nature, but rather to acknowledge that their often precarious conditions

of survival depend on different combinations of temporal awareness. However, both rural and urban communities share a vulnerability to the vagaries, the haunting uncertainties, of what Ulrich Beck depicts as a “shadow kingdom”:

Threats from civilization are bringing about a kind of new “shadow kingdom,” comparable to the realm of the gods and demons in antiquity, which is hidden behind the visible world and threatens human life on their Earth. People no longer correspond today with spirits residing in things but find themselves exposed to “radiation,” ingest “toxic levels,” and are pursued into their very dreams by the anxiety of a “nuclear holocaust” Dangerous, hostile substances lie concealed behind the harmless facades. Everything must be viewed with a double gaze, and can only be correctly understood and judged through this doubling. The world of the visible must be investigated, relativized with respect to a second reality, only existent in thought and concealed in the world.⁵¹

In Beck’s depiction this imperceptible shadow kingdom is spatially recessed behind “harmless façades.” But his spatial trope warrants a temporal gloss as well: beyond the optical façade of immediate peril, what demons lurk in the penumbral realms of the *longue durée*? What forces distract or discourage us from maintaining the double gaze across time? And what forces—imaginative, scientific, and activist—can help extend the temporal horizons of our gaze not just retrospectively but prospectively as well? How, in other words, do we subject that shadow kingdom to a temporal optic that might allow us to see—and foresee—the lineaments of slow terror behind the façade of sudden spectacle?

We need to question here Beck’s assumption that “people no longer correspond today with spirits residing in things,” in other words, that the divine and demonic shadow kingdom “of antiquity” has been superseded by the modern shadow kingdom of toxic and radiological hazards. This sequential narrative of threat does not adequately convey the persistent vitality of the numinous within modernity. For the majority of our planet’s people (and this is something Sinha brings to life) the two kingdoms of toxic threat and

spiritual threat interpenetrate and blend, creating a hybrid world of technominous fears.

Sinha and Carson: Leakages and Corporate Evaporations

Animal's People gives focus to the environmental politics of permeation and duration. Leakages suffuse the novel: gas leakages and category leakages, porous national borders and permeable fetal membranes, the living who are semidead and the dead who are living specters.⁵² What, the novel asks across a variety of fronts, are the boundaries of identity? Where do identities part or merge? How much change must an entity (an individual, a community, a corporation) undergo before it can assume the name of categorical difference, drawing a line across time?

On the subject of porous identities, it is worth noting one aspect of the Union Carbide story that Sinha, for whatever reasons, declined to enfold into his novel. In 2001, Union Carbide disappeared through that act of corporate necromancy known as the merger. Dow Chemical bought out Union Carbide, and so the name indelibly associated with disaster evaporated, further confounding the quest in Bhopal for environmental justice, compensation, remediation, and redress. Dow Chemical deployed this nominal vanishing act, this corporate shape-shifting, as a rationale for disclaiming responsibility for a disaster committed by a corporation that no longer exists.⁵³ If with Chernobyl the environmental fallout outlasted the empire responsible, with Union Carbide the fallout outlasted the transnational company responsible. Thus Soviet imperial fracture and American corporate merger both effectively circumvented or off-loaded historical culpability for the continued slow violence of delayed effects.

The evaporation of Union Carbide exemplifies the gap between the relative immobility of environmentally afflicted populations and the mobility (in time and space) afforded transnational corporations. What the extinct company leaves behind is ongoing proof of the excellent durability of its products; as *Animal* notes sardonically, the Kampani clearly concocted “wonderful poisons . . . so good it’s impossible to get rid of them, after all these years they’re still doing their work.”⁵⁴ The factory may have been abandoned, but the invisible poisons remain dynamic, industrious, and alive—full-time workers around the clock. The far less resilient biota, however,

express themselves primarily through the sensuality of absence: “Listen, how quiet,” Animal observes as he wanders the factory grounds. “No bird song. No hoppers in the grass. No bee hum. Insects can’t survive here.”⁵⁵ Sinha’s rhetorical strategy here—his summoning of ecological carnage through negative presence—echoes “La Belle Dame sans Merci,” which Rachel Carson chose as the epigraph to *Silent Spring*: “The sedge is wither’d from the lake, / And no birds sing.” Sinha’s rhetoric calls to mind, too, Carson’s use of negative presence in the controversial “Fable for Tomorrow” that launches *Silent Spring*, where she evokes the plight of a devastated community. In a once harmonious American heartland town (dubbed Green Meadows in an early draft of *Silent Spring*), “[t]here was a strange stillness. The birds, for example—where had they gone? . . . The hens brooded, but no chicks hatched. . . . The apple trees were coming into bloom but no bees droned among the blossoms, so there was no pollination and there would be no fruit.”⁵⁶

Both Carson and Sinha give the absence wrought by toxicity a sensory density; in so doing they strike a complex temporal note, through blended elegy and apocalypse, lamentation and premonition, inducing in us a double gaze backward in time to loss and forward to yet unrealized threats. Through this double gaze they restage environmental time, asserting its broad parameters against the myopic, fevered immediacy that governs the society of the catastrophe-as-spectacle.

The blighted community Carson depicts in “A Fable for Tomorrow” did not exist in its entirety, although all the component disasters Carson fed into her composite, fictionalized portrait had occurred at some point somewhere in America. By clustering these scattered microdisasters into a single imaginary community, she sought to counter the dissociative thinking encouraged by the temporal and spatial dispersion of environmental violence, acts that in isolation would pass beneath the radar of newsworthiness.

Like Carson, Sinha has clearly grappled with the imaginative dilemmas posed by the diffusion of slow violence across environmental time. But his response is differently inflected, given that all the disasters he summons to mind had indeed been concentrated in a single community. The problem he tackled, moreover, was one Carson never addressed directly: how some afflicted communities are afforded more visibility—and more access to remediation—than others through the mechanisms of globalization,

environmental racism, and class discrimination. This discriminatory distribution of environmental visibility—intranationally and transnationally—lies at the heart of Sinha’s fictional endeavor.

Almost half a century earlier, Carson had protested that the scattershot victims of “herbicides” and “pesticides” ought to be recognized as victims of indiscriminate “biocides” instead.⁵⁷ Sinha develops this idea of biocidal risk in terms redolent of Carson: one old Indian woman, bent double by the poisons, upbraids the Kampani lawyer thus: “you told us you were making medicine for the fields. You were making poisons to kill insects, but you killed us instead. I would like to ask, was there ever much difference, to you?”⁵⁸ Yet Sinha departs from Carson in representing “pesticides” as both indiscriminate and discriminatory: their killing power exceeds their targeted task of eliminating troublesome insects, but they do discriminate in the unadvertised sense of saddling the local and global poor with the highest burden of risk. Thus, by implication, the biocidal assault on human life is unevenly universal.

Extraordinary Events, Ordinary Forgetting

Looking back at Chernobyl, Hiroshima, Nagasaki, and Bhopal, Petryna laments how “many persons who have survived these large-scale technological disasters have been caught in a long-term and vicious bureaucratic cycle in which they carry the burden of proof of their physical damage while experiencing the risk of being delegitimated in legal, welfare, and medical institutional contexts.”⁵⁹ Such people, the illiterate poor above all, are thrust into a labyrinth of self-fashioning as they seek to fit their bodily stories to the story lines that dangle hope of recognition (possibly, though elusively), even recompense. In so doing, the poor face the double challenge of invisibility and amnesia: numerically, they may constitute the majority, but they remain on the margins in terms of visibility and official memory. From an environmental perspective, this marginality is perpetuated, in part, by what Davis terms “the dialectic of ordinary disaster,” whereby a calamity is incorporated into history and rendered forgettable and ordinary precisely because the burden of risk falls unequally on the unsheltered poor.⁶⁰ Such disasters are readily dismissed from memory and policy planning by framing them as accidental, random, and unforeseeable acts of God, without regard for

the precautionary measures that might have prevented these catastrophes or have mitigated their effects.

At stake here is the role of neoliberal globalization in exacerbating both uneven economic development and the uneven development of official memory. What we witness is a kind of fatal bigotry that operates through the spatializing of time, by off-loading risk onto “backward” communities that are barely visible in the corporate media. Contemporary global politics, then, must be recognized “as a struggle for crude, material dominance, but also (threaded ever closer into that struggle) as a battle for the control over appearances.”⁶¹ That battle over spectacle becomes especially decisive for public memory—and for the foresight with which public policy can motivate and execute precautionary measures—when it comes to the attritional casualties claimed, as at Bhopal, by the forces of slow violence.

We have seen, in recent years, some excellent analytical books about the plight of the international urban underclass by Davis, Jeremy Seabrook, and Jan Breman, among others. However, the kind of visibility such books afford is very different from the visibility offered by a picaresque novel. For even the most eloquent social scientific accounts of the underclass, like social scientific accounts of environmental disaster, veer toward the anonymously collective and the statistical. Such accounts thus tend to be in the same gesture humanizing and dehumanizing, animating and silencing.

The dilemma of how to represent the underclass, the *infrahombres*, stands at the heart of the picaresque tradition. Like *GraceLand*, Chris Abani’s superb picaresque novel about ingenious desperation in a Lagos shantytown, *Animal’s People* stages a disaggregated irruption of a vivid individual life. Animal, speaking his life story into the Jarnalis’s tape recorder, is all charismatic voice: his street-level testimony does not start from the generalized hungers of the wretched of the earth, but from the devouring hunger in an individual belly. If the novel gradually enfolds a wider community—Animal’s people—it does so by maintaining at its emotional center Animal, the cracked voiced soloist, who breaks through the gilded imperial veneer of neoliberalism to announce himself in his disreputable vernacular.⁶² His is the antivoice to the new, ornate, chivalric discourse of neoliberal “free trade” and “development.”

Through Animal’s immersed voice, Sinha is able to return to questions that have powered the picaresque from its beginnings. What does it mean to

be reduced to living in subhuman, bestial conditions? What chasms divide and what ties bind the wealthy and the destitute, the human and the animal? What does it mean, in the fused imperial language of temporal and spatial dismissal, to be written off as “backward”?⁶³

In *Animal*'s day-to-day meanderings, the impulse for survival trumps the dream of collective justice. Yet through his somatized foreign burden—and through the intrepid, blighted lives around him—Sinha exhumes from the forces of amnesia not just the memory of a long-ago disaster but the present and future force of that disaster's embodied, ongoing percolations. The *infrahombres*—those who must eke out an existence amidst such percolations—are, the novel insists, also of this earth. Through his invention of the environmental picaresque, Sinha summons to the imaginative surface of the novel the underclass's underreported lives, redeeming their diverse quirks and hopes and quotidian terrors from what, almost half a millennium ago, Lazaro recognized as “the sepulcher of oblivion.”⁶⁴

Notes

Preface

1. Edward Said, "Worldly Humanism v. the Empire-Builders," *Counterpunch*, August 4, 2003, 5. I am grateful to Anthony Vital and Hans-Georg Erney for drawing my attention to this essay in their editorial "Postcolonial Studies and Ecocriticism," *Journal of Commonwealth and Postcolonial Studies* 13 (2007): 6. One can also detect hints of an incipient environmental awareness in Said's meditations on the politics of land in *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage, 1994), 75. For some insightful reflections on Said's potential relationship to environmental thought, see Elizabeth DeLoughrey and George Handley's introduction to their forthcoming volume, *Postcolonial Ecologies: Literatures of the Environment* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).
2. Said, "Secular Criticism," *The World, the Text, and the Critic* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983), 3.
3. Said's relationship to postcolonial studies was an uneasy one, given that he viewed his work as more anti-imperial than postcolonial—particularly when the latter field became increasingly associated with poststructuralist methodologies. That said, Said is widely viewed as a foundational figure for postcolonial studies.
4. Ramachandra Guha, *How Much Should a Person Consume? Environmentalism in India and the United States* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 20.
5. *Ibid.*, 1.
6. *Ibid.*, 20.
7. Ramachandra Guha, "Radical American Environmentalism and Wilderness Preservation: A Third World Critique," *Environmental Ethics* 11 (1989): 71–83.

From their different vantage points, Murray Boochkin and Andrew Ross were also prescient figures in this dismantling.

8. Guha discusses the emergence of these terms in several places. See, for example, *How Much Should a Person Consume?* 214, 233; and Guha, *Environmentalism: A Global History* (New York: Longman, 2000), 98–124. A particularly decisive text for deepening and applying some of these core terms is Joan Martinez-Alier's *The Environmentalism of the Poor: A Study of the Ecological Conflicts and Valuation* (Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2003).
9. Guha, *How Much Should a Person Consume?* 1.
10. Guha, *The Unquiet Woods: Ecological Change and Peasant Resistance in the Himalaya* (Delhi, India: Oxford University Press; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989).

Introduction

1. Philip Arestis, “Furor on Memo at World Bank,” *New York Times*, February 7, 1992. For insightful commentary on Summers’ proposal, see also Upamanyu Pablo Mukherjee, *Postcolonial Environments: Nature, Culture and the Contemporary Indian Novel in English* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010)
2. Kevin Bale, *Disposable People: New Slavery in the Global Economy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).
3. Andrew Ross, *Strange Weather: Culture, Science and Technology in the Age of Limits* (New York: Verso, 1991), 207–212.
4. The term “West” is inevitably shorthand. The environmentalism of the poor within North America and Europe, although not the focus of this book, helped goad affluent environmentalists in the global North to diversify their vision of what counts as environmentalism and to recognize—in the present and retrospectively—third-world-generated activism as a vital force and potential ally in the global resource wars. That said, as I indicate in my penultimate chapter on the ecological threats posed by so-called precision warfare, it is often very difficult to articulate as a single narrative of risk the threat slow violence poses to the health of troops conscripted from the rich-nation poor and the threat to the even more impoverished people who inhabit war zones long term, war zones that are overwhelmingly located in the global South. The very difficulty of integrating such conjoined (if unequal) threats is symptomatic of the layered invisibility that defines slow violence. The poor, of course, are hardly restricted to the global South, but they are dramatically, disproportionately concentrated there.
5. Ramachandra Guha and Joan Martinez-Alier, *Varieties of Environmentalism. Essays North and South* (London: Earthscan, 1997), 12.

6. Arundhati Roy has expressed some unease toward the very notion of the writer-activist. Yet her concerns—that the term makes activist writers sound exceptional, that it risks institutionalizing them as experts, and risks narrowing our perception of both writers and activists—need to be taken with a grain of salt, as an exercise in self-protectiveness and false modesty, given her ineluctably institutionalized role in the media as professional (albeit dissident professional) go-between. The fact is only a tiny minority of writers assume an overtly activist public role and that minority—especially when they shuttle between the novel or poetry on the one hand and engaged nonfiction on the other—are routinely skittish, insisting on their imaginative autonomy from ideological obligation while also declaring their political commitments. Such balancing acts between avowal and disavowal surface in the writings of Albert Camus, Jean-Paul Sartre, James Baldwin, Langston Hughes, Wole Soyinka, Derek Walcott, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Carolyn Forché, Joseph Brodsky, Paul Muldoon, Mahmoud Darwish, and Nadine Gordimer to name but a few. For Roy's take on writer-activism, see *The Algebra of Infinite Justice* (London: HarperCollins, 2002), 186–187.
7. Edward Said, "The Public Role of Writers and Intellectuals," *The Nation*, September 17, 2001, 10.
8. Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Constance Farrington (1963; repr., New York: Grove, 1968), 42.
9. *Ibid.*, 36–37.
10. If historically Fanon was in no position to write about the slow violence of inequitably distributed environmental threats, he was, of course, alive to the psychological seepage of colonial values that could sustain neocolonialism. Furthermore, in "Colonial War and Mental Disorders" he is attuned to the slow violence that results from colonial "pacification," the psychological effects far outlasting specific acts of discernible violence. See *ibid.*, 249–316.
11. Quoted in Stephanie Cooke, *In Mortal Hands: A Cautionary History of the Nuclear Age* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2009), 168.
12. Zohl de Ishtar, *Daughters of the Pacific* (Melbourne: Spinifex Press, 1994), 24. In the nuclear exceptionalism upheld by mainstream Japanese memory, amnesia persists about Micronesian and Polynesian casualties of what were, in terms of the environmental and epidemiological *longue durée*, effectively American and French nuclear attacks.
13. Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1992), 17; Michael J. Watts, *Struggles over Geography: Violence, Freedom, and Development at the Millennium* (Hettner Lectures no. 3, University of Heidelberg, Department of Geography, 2000), 8.
14. Faulkner's oft-misquoted remark appears in *Requiem for a Nun* (1951; repr., New York: Routledge, 1987), 17.

15. Anne McClintock, Aamir Mufti, and Ella Shohat, eds., *Dangerous Liaisons* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 420–444.
16. For an astute examination of the impact of particulate residues on the timelines of environmental thinking—as well as on Victorian literary genres—see Jesse Oak Taylor’s dissertation, “‘A Sky of Our Manufacture’: Literature, Modernity and the London Fog from Dickens to Conrad” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2009).
17. Michael Crichton, *State of Fear* (New York: Avon, 2004), 626.
18. Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring* (1962; repr., Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1992), 32.
19. Eric Sevareid, “An Explosive Book,” *Washington D.C. Star*, October 9, 1962, 3.
20. Carson, *Silent Spring*, 238.
21. Johan Galtung, “Violence, Peace, and Peace Research,” *Journal of Peace Research* 6 (1969): 167–191.
22. This is not the place for a full assessment of Galtung’s prodigious writings about peace and violence. At a later point in his thinking, for instance, Galtung complicated his theory of structural violence by introducing the notion of cultural violence.
23. Wangari Maathai, *The Challenge for Africa* (New York: Pantheon, 2009), 83ff.
24. Jill S. Schneiderman, “Buddhist Living in the Anthropocene” (unpublished essay, 2010), 7. I am especially grateful to Schneiderman for a rich set of exchanges—including a comparison between Galtung’s ideas and my own—in response to a talk I gave at Vassar College in 2008.
25. *Ibid.*, 173.
26. In an indicative convergence of the tectonic shifts in geological thinking about speed and media technologies of speed, one notes that Crutzen first advanced his idea of the Anthropocene Age on his blog rather than going through the slower medium of a peer-reviewed academic journal (“The Anthropocene,” <http://www.mpch-mainz.mpg.de/~air/anthropocene/>).
27. Will Steffen, Paul J. Crutzen, and John R. McNeill, “The Anthropocene: Are Humans Now Overwhelming the Great Forces of Nature?” *Ambio* 36 (2007): 618.
28. Libby Robin, “The Eco-humanities as Literature: A New Genre?” *Australian Literary Studies* 23 (2008): 290.
29. Cory Doctorow, “Writing in the Age of Distraction,” *Locus Magazine*, January 7, 2009, <http://www.locusmag.com/Features/2009/01/cory-doctorow-writing-in-age-of.html>.
30. Quoted in Thomas Friedman, “The Age of Interruption,” *New York Times*, July 5, 2006, A27.
31. “Vietnam in Retrospect,” *New York Times*, March 23, 2003, A25.
32. Arnold Schecter et al., “Agent Orange and the Vietnamese: The Persistence of Elevated Dioxin Levels in Human Tissues,” *American Journal of Public Health* 85 (1995): 516–522.

33. Janie Lorber, "Defoliant May Be Tied to New List of Illnesses," *New York Times*, July 25, 2009, A8.
34. George Perkins Marsh, *Man and Nature*, ed. David Lowenthal (1864; repr., Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003), 15.
35. Leopold's address at the June 1934 dedication of the University of Wisconsin Arboretum, quoted in Scott Russell Sanders, "Speaking for the Land: Aldo Leopold as a Writer," author's personal Web site, http://www.scottrussellsanders.com/SRS%20entries/SRS_on_Leopold.htm. Leopold was inconsistent on this point, sometimes emphasizing an ethics of sensory immediacy grounded in local knowledge and sometimes emphasizing an intergenerational ethics less rooted in the moment or in a visible locale.
36. Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 15–37.
37. See especially David Michaels, *Doubt is Their Product. How Industry's Assault on Science Threatens Your Health* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008); Naomi Oreskes and Erik M. Conway, *Merchants of Doubt. How a Handful of Scientists Obscured the Truth on Issues from Tobacco Smoke to Global Warming* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2010); and James Hoggan, *Climate Cover-Up. The Crusade to Deny Global Warming* (Vancouver: Greystone Books, 2009).
38. Here I am invoking John Brinckerhoff Jackson's distinction outlined in *Discovering the Vernacular Landscape* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984). For a fine, nuanced interpretation of Jackson's insights in the context of American Indian literatures, see Joni Adamson, *American Indian Literature, Environmental Justice, and Ecocriticism: The Middle Place* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2001), 90–92. The term "landscape" is of course a contentious one that has a vexed aesthetic and political history. It has been critiqued for implying an external stance toward the land rather than an immersion in place.
39. Annu Jalais, *Forest of Tigers: People, Politics and Environment in the Sundarban* (New Delhi: Routledge, 2010), 11.
40. John Berger, "Twelve Theses on the Economy of the Dead," in *Hold Everything Dear: Dispatches on Survival and Resistance* (New York: Pantheon, 2007), 4–5.
41. Although some of my conclusions about the viability of neoliberalism as an analytic tool are antithetical to hers, my thinking here was informed by a lecture by Karen Bakker, "The Limits of Neoliberal Nature" (Yi-Fu Tuan Lecture, University of Wisconsin, October 23, 2009).
42. Michael Pollan's *The Botany of Desire* (New York: Random House, 2001) mounts the argument that certain plants (species of apples, marijuana, and potatoes among them) have used humans to their advantage.
43. Robert Campbell, "Special Report: Deepwater Spills and Short Attention Spans," Reuters, June 14, 2010.

44. “Don Young: Gulf Oil Spill ‘Not an Environmental Disaster,’” *Huffington Post*, June 6, 2010.
45. John Curry, quoted in Naomi Klein, “Gulf Oil Spill: A Hole in the World,” *Guardian*, June 19, 2010, 7.
46. On the creation of dead zones, see congressional testimony by University of Georgia biogeochemist, Samantha Joye. http://www.nsf.gov/news/special_reports/science_nation/hiddenoilplumes.jsp
47. We should distinguish categorically between an attentiveness to deep time environmental changes and the hokiness of deep ecology, a movement permeated by misanthropy and at best indifferent, at worst hostile, to the environmentalism of the poor.
48. On resource omnivores, see especially Madhav Gadgil and Ramachandra Guha, *Ecology and Equity: The Use and Abuse of Nature in Contemporary India* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 177–178.
49. I completed my undergraduate degree—as a double major in English literature and African languages—without ever being required to read a single work of nonfiction, which was roundly disparaged as nonliterary. The days when professors viewed the novel and poetry as the imagination’s soaring peaks and nonfiction as the valley of the shadow of death may be over, but nonfiction is still widely treated in literature departments as at best a subsidiary form.
50. I am aware that so-called biographical criticism has fallen out of favor. Yet it seems to me that biographical context often remains invaluable, especially (though not exclusively) when one is considering nonfiction.
51. Neither of Gordimer’s immigrant parents went to university, and she herself never completed a degree.
52. Tambu is not given a last name in the novel.
53. Tsitsi Dangarembga, *Nervous Conditions* (London: Women’s Press, 1988), 64.
54. *Ibid.*, 58.
55. Jamaica Kincaid, *My Garden (Book)* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1999), 115.
56. Wai Chee Dimock remains the finest literary scholar on the subject of the unexpected imaginative connection that speaks across geographical and historical divides.
57. https://www.indymedia.ie/article/72983?author_name=T&condense_comments=false&userlanguage=ga&save_prefs=true. Irish activists also host an annual Ken Saro-Wiwa Memorial Seminar on resource struggles against the abuses of natural resources by corporate giants.
58. For a brilliant analysis of the way allegorical translation may inform environmental struggles cross-culturally, see Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 227–238.

59. On the integration of scientific theories into the environmental humanities and social sciences, see especially William M. Adams, “When Nature Won’t Stay Still: Conservation, Equilibrium and Control,” in *Decolonizing Nature: Strategies for Conservation in a Post-colonial Era*, ed. William M. Adams and Martin Muligan (London: Earthscan, 2001), 220–246.
60. Within the general ecocritical indifference to social scientific scholarship, the most notable exception is the work on risk by the German sociologist, Ulrich Beck, which is receiving increasing attention. Among contemporary ecocritics, Pablo Mukherjee stands out as someone who has drawn creatively on disciplines that bridge the humanities and social sciences, most notably cultural geography and cultural anthropology.
61. Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 63. If ambivalence, irony, rupture, and hybridity are so pervasive, McClintock asks, how do the dominant powers become dominant in the first place; and how is power won and lost? What guarantees that some forms of power become dominant while others are subverted? Are the internal fissures in form and discourse just waiting to rupture from within, or is it the role of the critic (in an act of extreme professional self-regard) to facilitate such ruptures?
62. Ursula Heise, “Afterword,” in *Postcolonial Green: Environmental Politics and World Narratives*, ed. Bonnie Roos and Alex Hunt (Athens: University of Georgia Press, forthcoming).
63. Wai Chee Dimock and Lawrence Buell, eds., *Shades of the Planet: American Literature as World Literature* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), 12. For an excellent example of such cross-border genre thinking, see Rachel Adams, “At the Borders of American Crime Fiction,” in Dimock and Buell, *Shades of the Planet*, 249–273.
64. In the final chapter of this book, I elaborate on the implications of the belated engagement between postcolonial and ecocriticism, an engagement that has recently been energized from a variety of quarters.
65. Robert Vitalis, “Black Gold, White Crude: An Essay on American Exceptionalism, Hierarchy, and Hegemony in the Gulf,” *Diplomatic History* 26 (Spring 2002): 187.
66. Greg Garrard, *Ecocriticism* (London: Routledge, 2004), 178.
67. Robert Vitalis, *America’s Kingdom: Mythmaking on the Saudi Oil Frontier* (New York: Verso, 2008); Elizabeth DeLoughrey, “Heliotropes: Pacific Radiations and Wars of Light,” in *Postcolonial Ecologies: Literatures of the Environment*, ed. Elizabeth DeLoughrey and George Handley (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010); and Susie O’Brien, “Survival Strategies for Global Times,” *Interventions* 9 (2007): 83–98. DeLoughrey is particularly incisive on the transnational somatic, political, and imaginative fallout of American, British, and French

- nuclear colonialism. For a rich engagement with transnational environmental literatures, see also *Postcolonial Ecologies*, ed. Elizabeth DeLoughrey and George Handley (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).
68. Mike Davis, *Planet of the Slums* (New York: Verso, 2006), 72.
 69. On grassroots globalization, see especially Al Gedicks, *Resource Rebels* (Boston: South End Press, 2001); Stuart Hall, “The Local and the Global: Globalization and Ethnicity,” in *Culture, Globalization, and the World System*, ed. Anthony D. King (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota press, 1997), 1–21; and Arjun Appadurai, “Grassroots Globalization and the Research Imagination,” in *Globalization*, ed. Arjun Appadurai (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001), 1–29.
 70. Anup Shah, “World Military Spending,” Global Issues Web site, <http://www.globalissues.org/article/75/world-militaryspendingInContextUSMilitarySpendingVersusRestoftheWorld>.
 71. George Lamming, *The Pleasures of Exile* (1960; repr., Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1991), 17.
 72. Clearly, the problems of transnational answerability are not unique to the United States, but (until China’s recent ascent) have assumed their most consequential form in relation to U.S. and Soviet military and economic foreign policy during the post–World War II era.
 73. William Finnegan, “The Economics of Empire: Notes on the Washington Consensus,” *Harper’s*, May 1, 2003, 54.
 74. Al Gedicks, *Resource Rebels* (Boston: South End Press, 2001). For a superb analysis of successful South–North alliances as well as the challenges they face, see Ashley Dawson, “Introduction: New Enclosures” (in a special issue he edited on Imperial Ecologies). *New Formations* 69 (2010), 8–22.
 75. Anne McClintock, Ella Shohat, and Fernando Coronil, in particular, have put forward cogent arguments for the limitations of the term.
 76. Wendell Berry, “Word and Flesh,” in *What are People For?* (New York: North Point Press, 1990), 198.
 77. For an economical, yet textured account of this alliance of doubt purveyors, see especially George Monbiot, *Heat. How to Stop the Planet From Burning* (Cambridge, Mass.: South End Press, 2007), 20–42.
 78. Frank Luntz, “The Environment: A Cleaner, Safer, Healthier America” at http://reports.ewg.org/files/LuntzResearch_environment.pdf. Quoted Monbiot, *Heat*, 27.
 79. This memo was put out by the tobacco company Brown and Williamson. As Monbiot documents, the tobacco industry and the oil majors have worked with the same public relations firm to generate similar strategies for disseminating doubt about the scientific consensus on, respectively, the health risks of smoking and the human causes of climate change. See anon, “Smoking and Health Proposal,” Brown and Williamson document no. 680561778-1786 at <http://legacy>

- .library.ucsf.edu/tid/nvs4ofoo/pdf;jsessionid=E0544FD253BBD9968FB57B01E63F9F6B.tobaccoo4. Quoted David Michaels, *Doubt is Their Product. How Industry's Assault on Science Threatens Your Health* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 11.
80. Fanon, 38.
81. James Hoggan, *Climate Cover-Up. The Crusade to Deny Global Warming* (Vancouver: Greystone Books, 2009); Elizabeth Kolbert, *Field Notes from a Catastrophe: Man, Nature, and Climate Change* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2006); Naomi Oreskes and Erik M. Conway, *Merchants of Doubt. How a Handful of Scientists Obscured the Truth on Issues from Tobacco Smoke to Global Warming* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2010); Andrew Rowell, *Green Backlash. Global Subversion of the Environmental Movement* (London: Routledge, 1996); Tim Flannery, *The Weather Makers: How Man is Changing the Climate and What it Means for Life on Earth* (New York: Grove, 2001); Michaels, *Doubt is Their Product*; and Monbiot, *Heat*.
82. Matt Taibbi, "Taibbi's Takedown of 'Vampire Squid' Goldman Sachs," *Rolling Stone*, April 5, 2010, http://www.rollingstone.com/politics/story/28816321/inside_the_great_american_bubble_machine.
83. For a brilliant inquiry into the neglected field of public works in postcolonial literature, see Michael Rubenstein, *Public Works: Infrastructure, Irish Modernism, and the Postcolonial* (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010). Although his focus is Irish Modernism, Rubenstein's rich conceptual insights can be productively adapted to postcolonial literary studies at large.
84. Berger, "Undefeated Despair," 25.
85. Although the historical focus of Munif's novels *Cities of Salt* and *The Trench* stretches as far back as the 1930s, his perspective on the fallout from Saudi-U.S. petro-relations remains inflected by the geopolitics of the early to mid-1980s, when Munif was writing those two volumes of his oil quintet.
86. Sinha came to activism relatively late. He was (in his own words) an "accidental activist" whose commitments were triggered by two ad campaigns he devised for Amnesty International. Those campaigns raised funds for communities afflicted by two epochal acts of violence against the poor: Saddam Hussein's 1988 gas attacks on the Kurds and Union Carbide's 1984 gassing of Bhopal as a result of cost-cutting infrastructural neglect. Arguably, Sinha's professional training in the image world of advertising left him better equipped than most writer-activists of his generation to adapt his skills to the digital era.

i. Slow Violence, Neoliberalism, and the Environmental Picaresque

1. Raymond Williams, *Writing in Society* (London: Verso, 1983), 238.
2. Quoted in Edward Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: Reassertions of Space in Critical Social Theory* (London: Verso, 1989), 22.

3. Raymond Williams, *Resources of Hope* (London: Verso, 1989), 115. Sinha has insisted that although *Animal's People* is fictional, every major event that happens in the novel occurred in Bhopal.
4. Like a number of picaresque novels, *Animal's People* simulates orality, in this case the technological orality of a series of tapes the narrator makes for a foreign "Jarnalis" in an effort to record (but retain command over) his story. Sinha also adapts another widespread feature of the picaresque, the readerly aside, addressed here to the anonymous "Eyes," suggestive of reader-as-voyeuristic-outsider. This strategy concentrates a core dilemma that the protagonist shares with Khaufpur's poor: a desire to be recognized by the world at large, to break free from invisibility, but a horror at the dehumanizing vertical dynamics of pity that such recognition typically entails.
5. In Don DeLillo's *White Noise* (New York: Penguin, 1998) we witness a shift toward a different mode of biological citizenship in the wake of an "airborne toxic event" (117). When Jack Gladney, a professor of Hitler studies, attempts to assess his survival prospects, a health technician responds with a battery of ambiguous computerized statistics: "It's what we call a massive data-base tally. Gladney, J. A. K. I punch in the name, the substance, the exposure time and then I tap into your computer history. Your genetics, your personals, your medicals, your psychologicals, your police-and-hospitals. It comes back pulsing stars. This doesn't mean anything is going to happen to you as such, at least not today or tomorrow. It just means you are the sum total of your data" (ibid., 141). Ironically, the toxic invasion of Gladney's body occasions a second invasion, of his privacy by the state. His sense of self is technologized—statistically expanded and humanly reduced—without him gaining, in exchange, any greater surety as to his survival prospects.
6. For the most detailed accounts of this widespread American argument, see T. R. Chouham, *Bhopal: The Inside Story* (New York: Apex, 1994); and Larry Everest, *Behind the Poison Cloud: Union Carbide's Bhopal Massacre* (Chicago: Banner, 1986).
7. Indra Sinha, "The Commonwealth Writers' Prize: A Dedication," <http://www.indrasinha.com/blog?p=38>.
8. William Finnegan, "The Economics of Empire: Notes on the Washington Consensus," *Harper's*, May 1, 2003, 41; Naomi Klein, *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism* (New York: Metropolitan, 2007), 163.
9. Adriana Petryna, *Life Exposed: Biological Citizens after Chernobyl* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), 1.
10. For a powerful, intimate account of the impact of the Chernobyl disaster on Belarus, see Hope Burwell, "Jeremiad for Belarus," in *The Future of Nature*, ed. Barry Lopez (Minneapolis: Milkweed, 2007), 78–90.

11. According to Petryna, by 2001, 50 percent of Ukraine's population was living below the poverty line (*Life Exposed*, 93).
12. Petryna notes that "present-day processes of recompense . . . were entangled with new patterns of inequality that themselves presented the most immediate issues of social injustice. The very framing of 'injury' now entailed the social and health costs associated with state and market transformations and emerging inequalities" (*Life Exposed*, 218).
13. *Ibid.*, 78.
14. *Ibid.*, 35.
15. Lorna Siggins, "Cúirt Takes Capitalism to Task on Climate Change," *Irish Times*, April 28, 2008, 12; Everest, *Behind the Poison Cloud*, 17.
16. Indra Sinha, *Animal's People* (London: Simon, 2007), 230. The forces playing for time include both Union Carbide leaders and certain high-ranking Indian government officials who are leery of alienating a prominent global corporation that they hope will continue to invest in India.
17. Eavan Boland, "Desolation Angel," *Village Voice*, February 6, 1996, SS11.
18. Anthony Lane, "Big Kills," *New Yorker*, June 30, 2000, 87.
19. Sinha had been struggling to find a satisfying voice and perspective for his novel "when a friend showed me some photographs from Bhopal. There was one of a young lad of about 19 who was on all fours because his back was so badly twisted, but he had a sort of cheeky look about him. And just seeing that, it was as if the character of *Animal* just leapt fully fledged into my head" ("The Accidental Activist," 11).
20. Sinha, *Animal's People*, 23.
21. *Ibid.*, 78.
22. Petryna, *Life Exposed*, 30.
23. *Ibid.*, 30.
24. *Ibid.*, 3.
25. As *Animal* notes: "I was born a few days before that night, which no one wants to remember, but nobody can forget" (Sinha, *Animal's People*, 1). A preoccupation with making visible that which has been kept invisible and suppressed—not least the afflicted, forgotten poor themselves—recurs in the picaresque from the genre's beginnings.
26. The gold standard for literary discussions of toxic discourse remains the opening chapter of Lawrence Buell's *Writing for an Endangered World: Literature, Culture, and Environment in the U.S. and Beyond* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 30–54.
27. Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. L. S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 5.
28. *Ibid.*, 12.

29. For a fuller account of the economic context of the picaresque in the Spanish Golden Age, see *The Picaresque: A Symposium on the Rogue's Tale*, ed. Carmen Benito-Vessels and Michael Zappala (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1994); Giancarlo Maiorino, "Introduction: Renaissance Marginalities," in *The Picaresque: Tradition and Displacement*, ed. Giancarlo Maiorino (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), xi–xxviii; and Giancarlo Maiorino, "Picaresque Econopoetics: At the Watershed of Living Standards," in *The Picaresque*, 1–39.
30. Michel Serres, *The Parasite* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982), 14.
31. In keeping with the picaresque fixation with sharp twists of fate, the novel achieves a comic resolution through marriage and sudden wealth, as Animal reveals that he has amassed enough secret savings to buy another member of the underclass, the prostitute Anjali, from her pimp and marry her.
32. *Animal's People* blends the picaresque with, among other genres, the zombie story, which is set in motion by the novel's opening words—"I was once human. So I'm told"—and culminating in Animal's drug-addled wanderings among hallucinations of the living dead. This calls to mind the Chernobyl worker who depicts himself as one of the "living dead": "Our memory is gone. You forget everything—we walk like corpses" (Sinha, *Animal's People*, 1, 3).
33. Maiorino, "Picaresque Econopoetics," xi.
34. Animal refuses, to the end, a surgical resolution to his penumbral, buckled status. He has his rationales. But by implication, at least, he has seen enough of humanity not to mistake an upright posture for a stance of moral rectitude. Sinha's strategy here is reminiscent of Günter Grass's in *The Tin Drum*, where his magic realist narrator of historical catastrophe, Oskar Matzerath, opts out of the "progress" narrative of childhood to adulthood and clings in protest to his diminutive stature. Both books somatize the antihumanist strains that permeate them: Animal's and Oskar's bodies give physical testament to a conviction that, paradoxically, inhumanity ranks high among humanity's defining characteristics.
35. Sinha, *Animal's People*, 9.
36. *Ibid.*, 185.
37. *Ibid.*, 1, 214. Animal's Catholic adoptive mother (who after the disaster can only speak and comprehend French) also develops a tendency to babble apocalyptic portents that draw heavily on the Book of Revelation.
38. *Ibid.*, 366.
39. Mike Davis, *Planet of the Slums* (New York: Verso, 2006), 206.
40. Michael Eric Dyson, *Come Hell or High Water: Hurricane Katrina and the Color of Disaster* (New York: Basic, 2006), 23.

41. Quoted in Jacob Weinberg, "An Imperfect Storm," *Slate*, September 7, 2005, 3. Here Dyson's argument is reminiscent of the case Mike Davis makes in *Late Victorian Holocausts: El Niño Famines and the Making of the Third World*. See also Naomi Klein's closely argued contention that "the idea of exploiting crisis and disaster has been the modus operandi of fundamentalist capitalism." *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism* (New York: Metropolitan, 2007), 9. "By the time Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans, and the nexus of Republican politicians, think tanks and land developers started talking about 'clean sheets' and exciting opportunities, it was clear that this was now the preferred method of advancing corporate goals: using moments of collective trauma to engage in radical social and economic engineering" (*ibid.*, 8).
42. See, for example, K. Gopalakrishnan, "Unskilled Worker Had Cleaned Tank," *Hindustan Times*, December 5, 1984, 1; and Archana Kumar, "Sirens Called Them to Death," *Hindustan Times*, December 5, 1984, 1.
43. Njabulo Ndebele, *Fine Lines from the Box: Further Thoughts about Our Country* (Roggebaai, South Africa: Umuzi, 2007), 137.
44. Environmental racism is alive and well in India, entangled as it is with discriminatory traditions of caste, class, gender, religion, and aboriginality. Arundhati Roy has been particularly vocal on this matter. See Roy in conversation with David Barsamian in *The Checkbook and the Cruise Missile: Conversations with Arundhati Roy* (Cambridge, MA: South End, 2004), 125–127.
45. See Ndebele, *Fine Lines*, 137. In contemporary South Africa this failure notoriously manifested itself in the Mbeki government's calamitous mixture of equivocation and denial regarding the causes of HIV/AIDS. One outraged commentator condemned the resultant mass deaths as "genocide by sloth."
46. Sinha, "The Accidental Activist," 11.
47. Sinha, *Animal's People*, 283.
48. *Ibid.*, 92.
49. The character Shambhu is "a twice-victim of the Kampani. He had breathed the poisons of that night, plus the wells in his neighborhood were full of poisons leaked from the factory" (Sinha, *Animal's People*, 147). Sinha's account of this second, delayed hazard transmitted through well water recalls Rachel Carson's elegiac evocation of the poisoning of formerly pristine wells: "many man-made chemicals act in much the same way as radiation; they lie long in the soil, and enter into living organisms, passing from one to another. Or they may travel mysteriously by underground streams, emerging to combine, through the alchemy of air and sunlight, into new forms, which kill vegetation, sicken cattle, and work unknown harm on those who drink from once pure wells." Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring*, (1962; repr., Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1992), 23–24.

50. Here I am adapting the term “ecosystem people” from Ramachandra Guha and Juan Martinez-Alier, *Varieties of Environmentalism* (London: Earthscan, 1997), 12–13.
51. Ulrich Beck, *Risk Society: Toward a New Modernity*, trans. Mark Ritter (London: Sage, 1992), 72.
52. Animal gives focus to these category leakages when he reflects on his beating at the hands of the police: “Neither Christian am I nor Hindu nor Muslim, not Brahmin nor Sufi nor saint, neither man am I nor beast. I don’t know what is being beaten here. If they kill me what will die?” (Sinha, *Animal’s People*, 313).
53. Key figures within the Indian government were complicit in this sleight of hand, as they were reluctant to alienate a global powerhouse like Dow and hoped it would continue to invest in India.
54. Sinha, *Animal’s People*, 306.
55. *Ibid.*, 185.
56. Carson, *Silent Spring*, 2–3.
57. *Ibid.*, 8.
58. Sinha, *Animal’s People*, 306.
59. Petryna, *Life Exposed*, 216.
60. Mike Davis, “Los Angeles after the Storm: The Dialectic of Ordinary Disaster,” *Antipode* 27 (1995): 221–241.
61. Iain Boal et al., *Afflicted Powers: Capital and Spectacle in a New Age of War* (New York: Verso, 2005), 31.
62. The authenticity or realism of his animalized urchin voice is of no relevance here. Sinha’s novel is such a patently hybrid mix of picaresque, magic realist, social realist, gothic, zombie, and apocalyptic narrative strategies that questions of authenticity evaporate. It is the subversive charisma and page-turning urgency of Animal’s voice that matter, not whether real urchins speak like that in Bhopal (which, after all, is an inspiration for but hardly identical to Khaufpur).
63. Witness Nisha’s tirade against the Kampani: “My father’s precious justice is of no use, our government’s of no use, appeals to humanity are no use, because these people are not human, they’re animals” (Sinha, *Animal’s People*, 332). On hearing this, Animal balks at Nisha’s speciesism, which he reads as insulting to animals by debasing them to the level of humans.
64. Anon, *Lazarillo de Tormes*. Trans. Michael Alpert (Baltimore: Penguin, 1969), 23.

2. Fast-forward Fossil

1. For the title to this chapter, I am indebted to Ellen Driscoll’s 2009 exhibit “Fast-ForwardFossil,” a floor-sized environmental sculpture composed of recycled

plastic milk cartons that the artist harvested from dumps. Amalgamating features from three oil-drilling sites—the Niger Delta, the Alberta tar sands, and the North Sea—the exhibit creates a composite, subsiding landscape littered with abandoned oil derricks, sink holes, shattered trees, teetering houses, a gallows, and some empty cages. I read the salvaged plasticity of Driscoll's disposable landscape as the artist's way of giving imaginative shape to the slow violence of hydrocarbon time, past and future. The translucence of the recycled milk cartons—their material ghostliness—gives the sculpture an eerie, suspended quality that feels both elegiac and premonitory. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q38bGDNWKQw>

2. Although thinking about the resource curse began to take shape in the 1980s, Richard M. Auty's *Sustaining Development in Mineral Economies: The Resource Curse Thesis* (London: Routledge, 1993) proved decisive in giving the field a memorable catch phrase and a depth of analysis it had previously lacked. The literature on the resource curse is by now immense. For some useful overviews of the issues at stake, see *Escaping the Resource Curse*, ed. Macartan Humphreys, Jeffrey D. Sachs, and Joseph E. Stiglitz (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007); and Michael T. Klare, *Resource Wars: The New Landscape of Global Conflict* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2001).
3. Antony Anghie, *Sovereignty, Imperialism and the Making of International Law* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 114–137. I am grateful to Adom Getachew for alerting me to Anghie's work and for encouraging me to clarify this point.
4. William Reno, *Warlord Politics and African States* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1999), 7.
5. Ryszard Kapuscinski, *The Shah of Shahs*, trans. William R. Brand and Katarzyna Mroczkowska-Brand (New York: Vintage, 1985), 36.
6. Quoted in Fernando Coronil, *The Magical State: Nature, Money, and Modernity in Venezuela* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 1.
7. U.S. Census Bureau, *U.S. International Trade in Goods and Services, December 2009*, February 2010, <http://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/Press-Release/2009pr/12/>.
8. Peter Maas, "The Ministry of Oil Defense," *Foreign Policy*, August 5, 2010, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2010/08/05/the_ministry_of_oil_defense.
9. Amitav Ghosh, "Petrofiction," *New Republic*, March 2, 1992, 29–34.
10. Despite some expansive excursions into the Russian Revolution and World War I, Sinclair's oil novel does not engage the international ties that have come to dominate the story of petroleum and, above all, the fraught bonds between the United States and the Middle East. The reasons for this silence are obvious: Sinclair published *Oil!* before any American petroleum corporation had signed a

- concessionary agreement with a Gulf sheik and before the State of Israel existed. Arguably the most ambitious U.S. oil novel since Sinclair's is Linda Hogan's *Mean Spirit* (New York: Ivy Books, 1991). Set during the 1920s conflict over oil-rich Osage tribal lands in Oklahoma, *Mean Spirit* is informed by many of the "resource curse" concerns that animate the writings of both Munif and Saro-Wiwa.
11. Abdelrahman Munif's name sometimes also appears as Abd al-Rahman Munif. For consistency, I have deployed the former throughout, as it is the version of his name used in Peter Theroux's English translation.
 12. For Leopold's land ethic, see his posthumously published *A Sand County Almanac* (1949; repr., New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 59–73.
 13. Aldo Leopold, "Game and Wild Life Conservation," *Condor* 34 (1932): 103.
 14. Jacques Attali, *Millennium; Winners and Losers in the Coming Order* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 1992), 7. For a thoughtful essay on the indiscriminate use of the nomadic trope in contemporary theory, see Mokhtar Ghambou, "A Critique of Post/Colonial Nomadism," *Journal X* 6 (2001): 63–77.
 15. Munif, quoted in David Gilmour, "Desert Ruritania," *New York Review of Books*, March 26, 1992, 19.
 16. Bertolt Brecht, "An die Nachgeborenen (To posterity)," in *Selected Poems*, trans. H. R. Hays (New York: Grove Press, 1959), 177.
 17. Sabry Hafez provides a fuller overview of Munif's life and works in his exemplary essay, "An Arabian Master," *New Left Review* 37 (January/February 2006): 39–67. See also Rasheed El-Enany, "Cities of Salt: A Literary View of the Theme of Oil and Change in the Gulf," in *Arabia and the Gulf: From Traditional Society to Modern States*, ed. Ian Richard Netton (London: Croom Helm, 1986), 213–222; and Ellen McLarney, "Empire of the Machine": Oil in the Arabic Novel," *Boundary 2* 2009 36 (2): 177–198.
 18. Quoted in Hafez, "An Arabian Master," 43.
 19. In Iskander Habash, "Unpublished Munif Interview: Crisis in the Arab World—Oil, Political Islam, and Dictatorship," *AlJadid Magazine* 9 (2003): 3.
 20. For Munif's belief in the instrumental role of literature as a form of resistance and a way of reclaiming the past, see especially Sonja Mejcher Atassi, "Writing—A Tool for Change: Abd Al-Rahman Munif," <http://web.mit.edu/cis/www/mitejmes>.
 21. For Munif's reflections on his turn from organizational activism to (in his view) the more limited spheres of activism open to the public intellectual and writer, see Abdel Razzaq Takriti, "Writing—a Tool for Change," review of *Abdel Rahman Munif wal Iraq: Sira wa Dhikrayat*, ed. Maher Jarrar, *MIT Electronic Journal of Middle East Studies* 7 (Spring 2007), <http://web.mit.edu/cis/www/mitejmes>.
 22. Interview in *Banipal*, October 1998, quoted in Hafez, "An Arabian Master," 47. The 1967 defeat reverberated for Munif, as for many Arabs, with the

- humiliations suffered during the 1948 *nakbah*. A teenager at that time, Munif felt the shockwaves of the 1948 defeat closely as refugees poured into his hometown of Amman and transformed it. Munif testifies in the latter pages of his memoir how a young soldier, an Iraqi relative, made a lasting impression on him. The soldier passed through town twice: once as an exuberant young soldier en route to driving back the Zionists and then a second time as an angry, disillusioned member of the shambolic Arab retreat. Munif, *A Story of a City: A Childhood in Amman*, trans. Samira Kawar (London: Quartet, 1996), 275–307.
23. Habash, “Unpublished Interview,” 3.
 24. Although Munif’s books would be banned in Saudi Arabia (and elsewhere in the region), the Saudis revoked his citizenship on political grounds some years before he turned to writing.
 25. Many of his essays were infused with political polemic; others, however, addressed his great cultural passions, not least for the extensive traditions of Arab visual art, music, and architecture.
 26. Habash, “Unpublished Munif Interview,” 3.
 27. *Ibid.*, 4.
 28. Amiri Baraka (formerly LeRoi Jones), “The Changing Same: (R&B and the New Black Music),” in *Black Music* (New York: W. Morrow, 1967), 11.
 29. Indeed, the foreign oil-hunters try to camouflage their quest as a search for further water, but the locals are water-wise enough to suspect a ruse because the Americans are looking in the wrong places.
 30. Abdelrahman Munif, *Cities of Salt*, trans. Peter Theroux (New York: Vintage, 1984), 86.
 31. Retort, *Afflicted Powers: Capital and Spectacle in a New Age of War* (London: Verso, 2005), 75.
 32. Fernando Coronil, *The Magical State: Nature, Money, and Modernity in Venezuela* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 7.
 33. *Ibid.*, 9.
 34. Quoted Robert Vitalis, *America’s Kingdom: Mythmaking on the Saudi Oil Frontier* (London: Verso, 2009), 31.
 35. Wm. Roger Louis and Ronald Robinson, “The Imperialism of Decolonization,” *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 22 (1994): 462–511.
 36. Munif, *Cities of Salt*, 1.
 37. *Ibid.*, 86.
 38. *Ibid.*, 98.
 39. *Ibid.*, 106
 40. Robert Vitalis provides the most detailed, incisive account of the Jim Crow practices of American oil corporations in Saudi Arabia. See *America’s Kingdom*, 88–120.
 41. Munif, *Cities of Salt*, 295.

42. Here I am in accord with Ghosh (“Petrofictions”), Hafez (“An Arabian Master”), and McLarney (“Empire of the Machine”) who all remark upon Munif’s overly romantic pursuit of a prior authenticity.
43. Shepard Krech III, *The Ecological Indian: Myth and History* (New York: Norton, 2000). For a particularly insightful response to this work, see Annette Kolodny, “Rethinking ‘The Ecological Indian’: A Penobscot Precursor,” *Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and the Environment* 14 (2007): 12–31. See also Greg Garrard’s incisive reflections on assumed native environmental virtue in *Ecocriticism* (London: Routledge, 2004), 120–127.
44. See, for example, Munif’s account of how “the people of this immense, harsh desert were born, lived and died in a grim natural cycle” (*Cities of Salt*, 161).
45. Ghosh is especially insightful on Munif’s failure to give definition or interiority to the foreign workers, Asian and Middle Eastern, who are lured to Harran. See Ghosh, “Petrofictions,” 34.
46. Michael Upchurch, “Abdelrahman Munif Interview: Mixing It Up with Oil, Politics, and Fiction,” *Glimmer Train* 11 (1994): 69.
47. James Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997).
48. Munif, *Cities of Salt*, 10.
49. John Updike, “Satan’s Work and Silted Cisterns,” in *Odd Jobs: Essays and Criticism* (New York: Knopf, 1991), 563–570.
50. In conversation, June 10, 2007.
51. Updike, “Satan’s Work,” 566. Munif is imaginatively seeking to enter into the mindsets of Bedouin characters who, for religious and imperial historical reasons, remain profoundly suspicious of the motives of foreigners. Munif himself has long been on record as an opponent of what he calls political Islam, whether embodied by the Ayatollah Khomeini or by the politicized Islamic movements that America frequently helped foment and fund during the cold war as a perceived counterweight to communism.
52. *Ibid.*, 563.
53. *Ibid.*, 563–564.
54. *Ibid.*, 565.
55. John Updike, *Self-Consciousness* (New York: Fawcett, 1990), 37. Whatever Updike’s strengths as a writer, he didn’t possess any instinct for transnational imaginings, as evidenced by what is inarguably his most feeble novel, *The Terrorist*.
56. Munif, *Cities of Salt*, 367.
57. Munif’s sense of how easily place and history can be irreparably fractured calls to mind sentiments that Czeslow Milosz voices in *The Captive Mind*. As a Pole, through historical hardship, Milosz learned that what he calls the “natural” social and environmental order can be irreversibly undone at high speed.

- On arriving in the United States, he was startled by the widespread American assumption that the world they inhabited would “naturally” continue more or less the same. Milosz read this assumption as an imaginative shortcoming born of historical amnesia and geographical isolation. See Milosz, *The Captive Mind*, trans. Jane Zielenko (New York: Penguin, 1980), 25–30.
58. I am grateful to Samer Alatout for elucidating this meaning of *‘al-Tih* in conversation, June 6, 2009.
59. Vitalis, “Crossing Exceptionalism’s Frontier,” 12.
60. William E. Mulligan Papers, quoted in Vitalis, “Black Gold,” 205.
61. Patrick Flynn, “What It Means to Work for ARAMCO,” manuscript from 1984, box 11, folder 32, William E. Mulligan Papers, Special Collections Division, Lauinger Library, Georgetown University, Washington, DC. Quoted in Vitalis, *America’s Kingdom*, xi. Wallace Stegner, more ambiguous about his role as cheerleader for American corporate expansionism, nonetheless buys into a glossy magazine Orientalism: “This was Arabia as a romantic imagination might have created it; nights so mellow that they lay out under the scatter of dry bright stars, and heard the silence beyond their fire as if the whole desert hung listening. Physically, it might have been Arizona or New Mexico, with its flat crestlines, its dry clarity of air its silence. But it felt more mysterious than that; and the faces of soldiers and guide and interpreter, dark, bearded, gleaming in teeth and eye as they spoke or laughed, corroborated Hamilton’s sense that this was authentic Arabia, hardly touched by the West.” Wallace Stegner, *Discovery! The Search for Arabian Oil* (1971; repr., Portola St. Vista, CA: Selwa Press, 2007), 15.
62. Quoted in Aaron David Miller, *Search for Security: Saudi Arabian Oil and American Foreign Policy, 1939–1949* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 200.
63. Updike, “Satan’s Work,” 565.
64. Jennifer Wenzel, “Petro-magic-realism: Toward a Political Ecology of Nigerian Literature,” *Postcolonial Studies* 9 (2006): 449–464. Genres are of course never pure or absolute, but in terms of the mingled strands in Munif’s quintet, historical epic and satire are more prominent than magic realism.
65. Munif, *Cities of Salt*, 140–141.
66. Of course, the predominantly oral Bedouin community will have encountered writing before. However, what distinguishes the Americans is the way they write and how their writing is ritually enfolded into the customary shape of their strange days.
67. Munif, *Cities of Salt*, 45.
68. John Brinckerhoff Jackson, *Discovering the Vernacular Landscape* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984).

69. Munif, *Cities of Salt*, 545.
70. Abdelrahman Munif, *The Trench*, trans. Paul Theroux (New York: Vintage, 1993), 479.
71. John Berger, “Stones,” in *Hold Everything Dear: Dispatches on Survival and Resistance* (New York: Pantheon, 2007), 69.
72. Tim Flannery, *The Future Eaters: An Ecological History of the Australasian Lands and Peoples* (New York: Grove Press, 2002).
73. Upton Sinclair, *Oil!* (1927; repr., New York: Penguin, 2007), 527. Despite their many differences, Munif, like Sinclair, was a great observer of the technologies of power—and of crowd power and worker insurrections.
74. Human Development Index compiled by United Nations Development Program. <http://lib.stat.cmu.edu/datasets/humandev>.
75. Michael J. Watts, “Violent Geographies: Speaking the Unspeakable and the Politics of Space,” *City and Society* 8 (2001): 88.
76. Abdelrahman Munif, “Other Voices—Saudi Bomb Attack an Act of Despair,” trans. Peter Theroux, *Jinn Magazine* (Pacific News Service) 2 (June 30–July 2, 1996): 7.
77. Quoted in Tariq Ali, “Farewell to Munif: A Patriarch of Arab Literature,” *Counterpunch*, January 31/February 1, 2004, <http://www.counterpunch.org/alio1312004.html>.
78. Munif, “Other Voices,” 7.
79. *Ibid.*
80. *Ibid.*
81. Hafez, “An Arabian Master,” 58.
82. Stegner, *Discovery*. The fifteen-year delay between Stegner’s submission of the book and its publication is attributable to concerns within Aramaco that it might upset relations with the House of Saud. That said, *Discovery* is, for the most part, hell-bent on defending both the idea of American exceptionalism and the honorable role the American oil corporation played in Saudi uplift.
83. *Ibid.*, xvi.
84. *Ibid.*, xxix, xxx, xxvi.
85. *Ibid.*, xvii.
86. Abdelrahman Munif, *Ul-Khalij*, November 21, 1984, 10. Quoted in Rasheed El-Enany, “Cities of Salt: A Literary View of the Theme of Oil and Change in the Gulf,” in *Arabia and the Gulf: From Traditional Society to Modern States*, ed. Ian Richard Netton (London: Croom Helm, 1986), 220.
87. Quoted in Tariq Ali, “Farewell to Munif.”
88. Munif also laments the absence of fundamental rights in Saudi Arabia and, above all, the third-class status of Saudi women that he argues has profound repercussions for Saudi dignity and belonging.

3. Pipedreams

1. Ken Saro-Wiwa, *A Month and a Day: A Detention Diary* (London: Penguin, 1995).
2. Quoted in Richard Syge, "Ken Saro-Wiwa: An Obituary," *Independent (London)*, November 11, 1995, 20.
3. Ken Saro-Wiwa, "Prison Letter," *Mail and Guardian (Johannesburg)*, November 11, 1995, 1.
4. William Boyd, "Death of a Writer," *New Yorker*, November 27, 1995, 53.
5. Ken Saro-Wiwa, *Genocide in Nigeria: The Ogoni Tragedy* (Port Harcourt, Nigeria: Saros, 1992), 9.
6. Saro-Wiwa repeatedly uses the terms "recolonization" and "indigenous colonialism" to describe relations between Nigerian regimes that have favored the three major ethnic groups and violently suppressed the rights and claims of extreme minorities like the Ogoni. See, for example, *Genocide in Nigeria*, 20; and *Nigeria: The Brink of Disaster* (Port Harcourt, Nigeria: Saros, 1991), 71.
7. Saro-Wiwa, *A Month and a Day*, 131.
8. Quoted in Saro-Wiwa, *Genocide in Nigeria*, 19. On the problems bequeathed by the colonial invention of Nigeria, see also *Nigeria: The Brink of Disaster*, 45–46.
9. For a fuller description of the beginnings of the Nigerian petroleum industry, see Michael Watts, "Sweet and Sour," in *Curse of the Black Gold: Fifty Years of Oil in the Niger Delta*, ed. Michael Watts (New York: Powerhouse, 2008), 36.
10. Watts, "Sweet and Sour," 43.
11. This clause referred to revenue generated by both mineral sales and mining rents. See Saro-Wiwa, *Genocide in Nigeria*, 21.
12. Even that figure exaggerates the amount they have received, for most of the 1.5 percent has been unilaterally "borrowed" by the powerful states where the Yoruba, the Igbo, and the Hausa-Fulani are in the majority.
13. David Wheeler, "Blood on British Business Hands," *New Statesman and Society*, November 17, 1995, 14.
14. Robert Vitalis, "Black Gold, White Crude: An Essay on American Exceptionalism, Hierarchy, and Hegemony in the Gulf," *Diplomatic History* 16 (Spring 2002): 186.
15. Al Gedicks, *Resource Rebels* (Boston: South End Press, 2001), 49.
16. Quoted by Claude Ake, in an interview with Andrew Rowell, *Green Backlash: Global Subversion of the Environmental Movement* (London: Routledge, 1996), 27.
17. For the most authoritative account of the events leading up to these killings, see Human Rights Watch/Africa, *Nigeria: The Ogoni Crisis—A Case-Study of Military Repression in Southeastern Nigeria*, Human Rights Watch/Africa 7, no. 5 (1995), esp. 7–25. See also Andy Rowell, "Trouble Flares in the Delta of Death," *Guardian*, November 8, 1995, 10; and Rowell, "Shell Shocked," *Village Voice*, November 21, 1995, 21.

18. Sam Bakilo Bako, quoted in Saro-Wiwa, *Genocide in Nigeria*, 58.
19. Panedom Badom, quoted *ibid.*, 66.
20. Oamen Enaholo, quoted *ibid.*, 79.
21. David Wheeler, "Blood on British Business Hands," *New Statesman and Society*, November 17, 1995, 14.
22. Saro-Wiwa argues that the African writer ought to be *l'homme engage* in *A Month and a Day*, 81.
23. Ken Saro-Wiwa, *Sozaboy: A Novel Written in Rotten English* (Port Harcourt, Nigeria: Saros, 1985). For a discussion of Saro-Wiwa's use of dialect, see Chantal Zabus, "Mending the Schizo-Text: Pidgin in the Nigerian Novel," *Kunapipi* 14 (1992): 119–127; and Willfried F. Feuser, "The Voice from Dukana: Ken Saro-Wiwa," *Matatu* 1 (1987): 49–57.
24. For Saro-Wiwa's own reflections on this experience, see Ken Saro-Wiwa, "A Television Drama in Nigeria: A Personal Experience" (paper presented at the African Literature Association Conference in Pittsburgh, April 1988).
25. Saro-Wiwa, *Nigeria: The Brink of Disaster*, 118.
26. This is not, of course, to suggest that all Saro-Wiwa's multigeneric output was overtly instrumental, just that a considerable body of his writing, particularly his nonfiction, was expressly so. See, for example, his insistence that "literature in a critical situation such as Nigeria's cannot be divorced from politics. Indeed, literature must serve society by steeping itself in politics, by intervention. . . . [Writers] must play an interventionist role . . . The writer must be *l'homme engage*: the intellectual man of action." Quoted in Charles R. Larson, ed., *Under African Skies* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1997), 210.
27. The traditions of socialism were never as prominent in Anglophone West Africa as they were in Southern and East Africa, not least because West Africa was more shallowly colonized than Kenya, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Mozambique, and Angola. West Africa was thus spared the ravaging anticolonial wars in which the goals of decolonization and socialism typically converged.
28. Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Barrel of a Pen: Resistance to Repression in Neo-colonial Kenya* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1983); Mafika Gwala, "Writing as a Cultural Weapon," in *Momentum: On Recent South African Writing*, ed. M. J. Daymond, J. U. Jacobs and Margaret Lenta (Pietermaritzburg, South Africa: Natal University Press, 1984), 37–44.
29. Cited in Aaron Sachs, "Eco Justice: Linking Human Rights and the Environment," (Washington, DC: Worldwatch Paper 127, 1995), 53.
30. David C. Korten, *When Corporations Rule the World* (London: Earthscan, 1995), 124.
31. Saro-Wiwa, *Genocide in Nigeria*, 7.
32. Saro-Wiwa, *A Month and a Day*, 88.

33. *Ibid.*, 88.
34. Ken Saro-Wiwa, interviewed on *Without Walls: The Hanged Man—Nigeria's Shame*, Channel 4 (UK), November 15, 1995.
35. Saro-Wiwa, *A Month and a Day*, 79.
36. *Ibid.*, 94.
37. *Ibid.*, 183.
38. *Ibid.*, 73.
39. The phrase “judicial murder” was coined by then British prime minister John Major. See Michael Homan, “Commonwealth Challenge,” *Financial Times*, November 13, 1995, 18.
40. *A Month and a Day*, 165.
41. Bob Herbert, “Unholy Alliance in Nigeria,” *New York Times*, January 26, 1996, A27.
42. For Saro-Wiwa’s insistence that corporate racism and Nigerian domestic colonialism are equally at fault, see *Without Walls*. He also makes this case in both *Genocide in Nigeria* (8, 82) and *A Month and a Day* (18, 73, 186–188).
43. Greenpeace International, *Shell Shocked: The Environmental and Social Costs of Living with Shell in Nigeria* (Amsterdam: Greenpeace International, 1994), 9. See also Rob Nixon, “The Oil Weapon,” *New York Times*, November 17, 1995, A31.
44. Saro-Wiwa, *A Month and a Day*, 170.
45. On the flaring, see Nick Aston-Jones, in Rowell, *Green Backlash*, 291; Ike Okonta and Oronto Douglas, *Where Vultures Feast: Shell, Human Rights, and Oil* (London: Verso, 2003); and Michael Watts, “Black Gold, White Heat: State Violence, Local Resistance and the National Question in Nigeria,” in *Geographies of Resistance*, ed. Steve Pile and Michael Keith (London: Routledge, 1997), 53.
46. Robert J. C. Young, “Dangerous and Wrong: Shell, Intervention and the Politics of Transnational Companies,” *Interventions* 1 (1999): 457.
47. Saro-Wiwa, *Genocide in Nigeria*, 82.
48. Rowell, “Trouble Flares in the Delta of Death,” 11.
49. The Igbo dream of creating an independent secessionist nation called Biafra would not have been viable without the sea of oil beneath the Niger Delta, which they included in their projected Biafra. The prospect of losing that oil wealth intensified the ferocity of the Hausa-Yoruba response to the secessionists.
50. Saro-Wiwa, *A Month and a Day*, 187.
51. Ken Saro-Wiwa, *On a Darkling Plain: An Account of the Nigerian Civil War* (Lagos, Nigeria: Saros, 1989), 29. See also Saro-Wiwa, *Genocide in Nigeria*, 87–88.
52. Saro-Wiwa, *Genocide in Nigeria*, 7. The neocolonial rapport between the Nigerian leadership and the oil companies may be illustrated by the case of Philip Asiodu, a Nigerian director of Chevron. Asiodu has reassured investors, “Given the small size and population of the oil-producing areas, it is not cynical to

- observe that even if the resentments of oil producing states continue, they cannot threaten the stability of the country nor affect its continued economic development” (quoted in Saro-Wiwa, *Genocide in Nigeria*, 87). Before becoming a director of Chevron, Asiodu had held a prominent post in Nigeria’s Federal Ministry of Mines and Power. Nor is he the only such crossover figure: the Abacha regime and the transnationals held the delta micro-minorities in similar contempt, treating them principally as impediments to personal fortune.
53. Jonathan Freedland, “American Blacks on Nigeria,” *Guardian*, March 26, 1996, 5.
 54. Saro-Wiwa, *A Month and a Day*, 188.
 55. See, for example, his interview on *Without Walls* in which he called for economic sanctions and Nigeria’s expulsion from the United Nations. He argued that “[t]he military governments of Nigeria have sat on other Nigerians in a way that is just as evil as what was done in South Africa.”
 56. General Sani Abacha and his military regime annulled the democratic elections of November 1993 and imprisoned president-elect Mashood Abiola and other internal opposition leaders on trumped up charges of treason. In July 1995, former president Olusegun Obasanjo and forty other opponents of the regime were convicted and sentenced to death. After an international outcry, these sentences were commuted to life in July 1995. Four months later, another of Abacha’s kangaroo courts condemned Saro-Wiwa and the Ogoni Eight to hang.
 57. Mandela’s stance echoed that of his first deputy, Thabo Mbeki, who had visited Nigeria in July 1995, and failing to dissuade Abacha from his hardline course had nonetheless concluded that “[w]e need a more equal relationship. Western countries must accept the capacity of African countries to set an African agenda.” Quoted in “Too Gentle Giant,” *Economist*, November 18, 1995, 42.
 58. “Pretoria Blunders as Nigeria Burns,” *Mail and Guardian (Johannesburg)*, November 11, 1995, 3.
 59. Rahana Rossouw, “You Can’t Blame Mandela,” *Mail and Guardian (Johannesburg)*, November 17, 1995, 17.
 60. Robert Block, “When Mandela Went Missing,” *Independent*, November 21, 1995, 17.
 61. Quoted in Steve Crawshaw and James Robers, “Pressure Mounts for Nigeria Oil Ban,” *Independent*, November 13, 1995, 1.
 62. “Where Oppression Has No Tribe,” *New Statesman and Society*, November 17, 1991, 15.
 63. Peter Vale, quoted in Robert Block, “When Mandela Went Missing,” *Independent*, November 21, 1995, 17.
 64. Piqued by South African condemnations of Nigeria after Saro-Wiwa and the Ogoni Eight were executed, Abacha barred the national soccer team (and African champions at the time), the Eagles, from participating in the African Cup

- of Nations in South Africa. The symbolic import of this competition, contested by fifty-two African nations, can scarcely be overestimated: throughout Africa it is the premier event on the sporting calendar. The Eagles' inability to defend their title (and South Africa's ensuing victory) became a deep source of national mourning in Nigeria and the surest mark of the country's growing isolation.
65. This ad was placed by the Philippine government in *Fortune* in 1975. Quoted in Korten, *When Corporations Rule the World*, 159.
66. See Eyal Press, "Freeport-McMoran at Home and Abroad," *The Nation*, July 31, 1995, 125; Warren St. John, "Last Resort," *Lingua Franca*, November/December, 1993: 15–17; Aidan Rankin, "Primitive? Then What Are We?" *Independent (London)*, January 17, 1996, 16.
67. Quoted in Rankin, "Primitive," 16.
68. *Ibid.*
69. For two powerful accounts of the battle over the Oriente, see Judith Kimerling, *Amazon Crude* (San Francisco: National Resources Defense Council, 1991); and Joe Kane, *Savages* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1995).
70. Rick Bass, quoted in Kimerling, *Amazon Crude*, iv.
71. Quoted in Robert D. Kaplan, *The Ends of the Earth: A Journey at the Dawn of the 21st Century* (New York: Random House, 1996), 63.
72. David Orr, "Shell Wins Over Village with Cash and Liquor," *Independent (London)*, December 1, 1995, 18.
73. Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* (1899; repr., New York: Signet, 1978), 99.
74. Saro-Wiwa, *Genocide in Nigeria*, 91.
75. James Ferguson, "Seeing Like an Oil Company: Space, Security, and Global Capital in Neoliberal Africa," *American Anthropologist*, 107 (September 2005): 380.
76. Quoted in Cameron Duozu, "Cry the Beloved Country," *Observer*, November 12, 1995, 24.
77. Quoted John Berger, *Hold Everything Dear*, 66.
78. Donatella Lorch, "Is Kenya Sliding Back Toward Repression?" *New York Times*, October 29, 1995, 3.
79. Ian Black, "Nigeria Defies World With Writer's Judicial Murder," *Guardian (London)*, November, 11, 1995, 1.
80. *Ibid.*
81. Watts, "Sweet and Sour," 37.
82. Ken Wiwa, *In the Shadow of a Saint: A Son's Journey to Understand His Father's Legacy* (South Royalton, VT: Steerforth Press, 2001), 251.
83. *Ibid.*, 148.
84. *Ibid.*, 180.
85. Jad Mouawad, "Shell Agrees to Settle Abuse Case," *New York Times*, June 9, 2009, B1, B5; "Spilling Over," *Economist*, June 11, 2009, 23.

86. Ken Saro-Wiwa, *Genocide in Nigeria*, 91.
87. Mouawad, “Shell Agrees to Settle Abuse Case,” B5.
88. Okonta and Douglas, *Where Vultures Feast*, 204.
89. *Ibid.*, 163.
90. Watts, *Curse of the Black Gold*, 197.
91. Mouawad, “Shell Agrees to Settle Abuse Case,” B5.
92. Okonta and Douglas, *Where Vultures Feast*, 112.
93. Quoted in Watts, *Curse of the Black Gold*, 217.
94. *Ibid.*, 44.
95. Xan Rice, “Oil Find Sparks New Hope for Uganda’s People,” *Guardian (London)*, August 25, 2009, 11.

4. Slow Violence, Gender, and the Environmentalism of the Poor

1. Anna Lappe and Frances Moore Lappe, “The Genius of Wangari Maathai,” *International Herald Tribune*, October 15, 2004, 1–2.
2. Wangari Maathai, *Unbowed: A Memoir* (New York: Knopf, 2006), 175.
3. Lester R. Brown, “The Price of Salvation,” *Guardian*, April 25, 2007, 1.
4. Hendrik Hertzberg, “The War in Iraq,” *New Yorker*, March 27, 2003, 15.
5. *Ibid.*
6. The insistence that shock and awe was the beginning of a war unprecedented in its humanitarian precision was heard across the political spectrum. Donald Rumsfeld, most memorably, insisted that the futuristic weaponry the United States deployed in the war exhibited “a degree of precision that no one dreamt of in a prior conflict,” resulting in bombings that were morally exemplary: “The care that goes into it, the humanity that goes into it, to see that military targets are destroyed, to be sure, but that it’s done in a way, and in a manner, and in a direction and with a weapon that is appropriate to that very particularized target. . . . I think that will be the case when ground truth is achieved” (United States Department of Defense, “DoD News Briefing—Secretary Rumsfeld and Gen. Myers,” March 21, 2003).
7. Wangari Maathai, *The Green Belt Movement: Sharing the Approach and the Experience* (New York: Lantern Books, 2003), 38.
8. See especially Vandana Shiva, *Earth Democracy: Justice, Sustainability, and Peace* (Boston: South End Press, 2005); and *Soil Not Oil: Environmental Justice in an Age of Climate Crisis* (Boston: South End Press, 2008).
9. Wes Jackson, “The Agrarian Mind: Mere Nostalgia or a Practical Necessity?” in *The Essential Agrarian Reader*, ed. Norman Wirzba (Washington, DC: Shoemaker and Hoard, 2003), 141.
10. Maathai, *Unbowed*, 281.

11. Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Petals of Blood* (1977; repr., London: Penguin, 2002).
12. Laura Wright, *Wilderness Into Civilized Shapes: Reading the Postcolonial Environment* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2010), 33–35.
13. For a related and insightful discussion of what she calls “articulated categories,” see Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 4ff.
14. Ato Quayson, *Calibrations* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 73.
15. Meera Selva, “Wangari Maathai: Queen of the Greens,” *Guardian*, October 9, 2004, 9.
16. William Finnegan, “The Economics of Empire: the Washington Consensus,” *Harper's*, May 2003, 48.
17. Bertolt Brecht, “An die Nachgeborenen” (To posterity), in *Selected Poems*, trans. H. R. Hays (New York: Grove Press, 1959), 173.
18. The time frame here is crucial. With the help of international donors, Maathai put in place a system whereby each woman was paid a modest amount not for planting a tree, but for keeping it alive for six months. If it were still growing at that point, she would be remunerated. Thus the focus of the group's activities was not the single act of planting but maintaining growth over time. The literature on desertification is complex and conflicted, largely around questions of the scale and source of the problem as well as the quality of the research. Given the fraught debates over the implications of desertification, I have avoided the term, preferring simply to reference the slow violence of soil erosion and deforestation. For two useful accounts of the spread of positions on this issue, see Jeremy Swift, “Desertification: Narratives, Winners and Losers,” in *The Lie of the Land: Challenging Received Wisdom on the African Environment*, ed. Melissa Leach and Robin Mearns (Oxford: James Currey, 1996); and William M. Adams, “When Nature Won't Stay Still: Conservation, Equilibrium and Control,” in *Decolonizing Nature: Strategies for Conservation in a Post-Colonial Era*, ed. William M. Adams and Martin Mulligan (London: Earthscan, 2003).
19. Michela Wong, *It's Our Turn to Eat: The Story of a Kenyan Whistle-Blower* (New York: Harper 2009), 37.
20. Maathai, *Unbowed*, 262.
21. Michael Pollan, *Second Nature: A Gardener's Education* (New York: Dell, 1991), 194.
22. Ramachandra Guha, *Environmentalism: A Global History* (New York: Longman, 2000), 115–124.
23. A major precursor to the conflict over Karura had occurred in 1989. The regime had been steadily appropriating and privatizing parts of Nairobi's Uhuru Park, which Maathai has likened to New York's Central Park and London's Hyde Park as a vital green space, a space for leisure and for political gatherings. When

Maathai learned that the ruling party was to erect a sixty-story skyscraper for new party headquarters and a media center in Uhuru Park, battle was joined. Green Belt activists spearheaded a successful movement to turn back the regime's efforts to privatize public land under the deceptively spectacular iconography of national development. The regime would not forgive Maathai for humiliating them in this manner.

24. Amitabh Pal, "Maathai Interview," *Progressive*, May 2005, 5.
25. I've adapted the phrase from Al Gedicks' book, *Resource Rebels: Native Challenges to Mining and Oil Corporations* (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2001).
26. For the history of the forest fighters, see Caroline Elkins, *Imperial Reckoning: The Untold Story of Britain's Gulag in Kenya* (New York: Holt, 2005); Wunyabari O. Maloba, *Mau Mau and Kenya: An Analysis of a Peasant Revolt* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998); and especially David Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged: The Dirty War in Kenya and the End of Empire* (New York: Norton, 2005), 230–288.
27. For the most comprehensive discussion of this literature, see David Maughan-Brown, *Land, Freedom and Fiction: History and Ideology in Kenya* (London: Zed Press, 1985).
28. The Mau Mau uprising was far from being an undivided revolt: numerous fault lines opened up at times, not least between educated nationalist leaders and the predominantly peasant forest fighters.
29. Byron Caminero-Santangelo, "Different Shades of Green: Ecocriticism and African Literature," in *African Literature: An Anthology of Criticism and Theory*, ed. Tejumola Olaniyan and Ato Quayson (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), 702.
30. In many Kenyan novels about the Mau Mau period, the forest fighters are depicted with a cloying if understandable romanticism. On the complex and varied legacies of colonial cultures of nature, one notes Maathai's admiration for the Men of the Trees, an organization founded in Kenya in the 1920s that brought together British and Kikuyu leaders to promote tree planting (Maathai, *Unbowed*, 131).
31. Although the initial resistance came from the Green Belt Movement, the resistance spread to the streets of Nairobi, where it was taken up by a broad swath of the population, particularly students, both female and male.
32. Maathai, *Unbowed*, 120.
33. See William Beinart and Peter Coates, *Environmental History: The Taming of Nature in the U.S.A. and South Africa* (London: Routledge, 1995); Jane Carruthers, *The Kruger National Park: A Social and Political History* (Pietermaritzburg, South Africa: Allen, 1995); and A. Fiona D. Mackenzie, "Contested Ground: Colonial Narratives and the Kenyan Environment, 1920–1945," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 26 (2000): 697–718.

34. James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998), 264.
35. Fiona Mackenzie, "Contested Ground," 27. Mackenzie, like Beinart, stresses that there were among colonial officialdom some dissident voices who recognized the value and applicability of local agricultural and environmental knowledge.
36. Stuart Jeffries, "Kenya's Tree Woman," *Mail and Guardian*, February 28, 2007, 7.
37. Maathai, *Unbowed*, 179.
38. For an ambitious experiment in adaptively blending a singular self, a social movement, and a polemical agenda, see W. E. B. Du Bois, *Dusk of Dawn: An Essay Toward an Autobiography of a Race Concept* (1940; repr., New York: Transaction Publishers, 1983).
39. An important distinction should be made between the routes that Carson and Maathai took to their writing and their activism. Carson was a lifelong writer who remade herself as an activist late in life, after she traded her lyrical voice (which she'd honed as a celebrant of marine life) for the voice of elegy and apocalypse in *Silent Spring*. Maathai's trajectory was in the opposite direction: an activist all her adult life, she became a writer of testimony only in her later years.
40. Linda Lear, *Rachel Carson: Witness for Nature* (New York: Holt, 1997), 254.
41. Quoted in Lear, *Rachel Carson*, 429.
42. "Pesticides: The Price of Progress," *Time*, September 28, 1962, 45. Quoted in Lear, *Rachel Carson*, 461. Additionally, a review by Carl Hodge was entitled "Silent Spring Makes Protest Too Hysterical," *Arizona Star*, October 14, 1962, 7.
43. Quoted in Lear, *Rachel Carson*, 417.
44. Quoted *ibid.*, 409.
45. Quoted in "The Silent Spring of Rachel Carson," transcript, *CBS Reports*, April 3, 1963.
46. Anon, "Controversial Book by Rachel Carson Lives Up to Advance Warnings," *Aerosol Age*, October 1962, 81. I'm grateful to Lindsay Woodbridge for first drawing my attention to this review in her fine unpublished senior thesis, "The Fallout of Silent Spring" (University of Wisconsin-Madison, Women's Studies, 2007).
47. This misogyny, together with the regime's authoritarian intolerance of dissent, had profound professional and financial repercussions for Maathai. In 1982, after teaching at the University of Nairobi for sixteen years, she decided to run for parliament. To do so, she was told she had to resign from her job at the university. She was then promptly informed by the electoral committee that she was disqualified (on a trumped up technicality) from running for parliament. So, twelve hours after resigning as chair of the university's Department of Veterinary Anatomy, Maathai asked for her job back. Under pressure from the regime, the university refused to reemploy her and, moreover, denied her

- all pension and health benefits. Maathai, a forty-one-year-old single mother with no safety net, was thrown out onto the streets. One notes that, in 2005, shortly after Maathai was awarded the Nobel Prize, the very university that had treated her so appallingly tried to cash in on her international fame by awarding her an honorary doctorate in science.
48. Meera Selva, “Wangari Maathai: Queen of the Greens,” *Guardian*, October 9, 2004, 8.
 49. Quoted in Jim Motavelli, “Movement Built on Power of Trees,” *E: The Environmental Magazine*, July–August 2002, 11.
 50. Maathai, *Unbowed*, 110.
 51. *Ibid.*, 111. For a more elaborate account of the burden of traditionalism placed on women in the context of a Janus-faced modernity, see Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 294–300.
 52. Maathai, *Unbowed*, 115, 196. There are echoes between the nativist arguments mounted against Maathai by President Moi and the arguments of her ex-husband, Mwangi, who testified in court that he was divorcing her because she was ungovernable: “[T]oo educated, too strong, too successful, too stubborn, and too hard to control” (quoted in *Unbowed*, 146).
 53. Kwame Anthony Appiah, *In My Father’s House* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 55.
 54. Maathai, *Unbowed*, 44–46.
 55. Maathai, *Unbowed*, 4.
 56. Quoted in Patrick E. Tyler, “In Wartime, Critics Question Peace Prize for Environmentalism,” *New York Times*, October 10, 2004, A5. Morten Hoeglund, a member of Norway’s Progress Party, concurred with Hagen, arguing that “the committee should have focused on more important matters, such as weapons of mass destruction” (quoted in Selva, “Wangari Maathai,” 9).
 57. Quoted in Patrick E. Tyler, “Peace Prize Goes to Environmentalism in Kenya,” *New York Times*, October 9, 2004, A5. See, for example, Maathai’s insistence that through a focus on reforestation and environmental resource management, “we might preempt many conflicts over the access and control of resources” (*Unbowed*, xvi).
 58. In Kenya, which boasts some forty ethnicities, the sources of ethnic tension are complex, but have often been especially explosive along the fault lines between pastoralists and farmers where resources are overstressed. Divisive politicians have manipulated these tensions to their advantage, for instance, during the violence that beset the Rift Valley, Nyanza, and Western provinces in the early 1990s and, more broadly, during the aftermath of the disputed national elections of 2007. The slow violence of resource depletion, a mistrust of government, and

- political leaders who play the ethnic card can easily kindle an atmosphere of terror that fuels social unrest.
59. Wai Chee Dimock, “World History According to Katrina,” in *States of Emergency*, ed. Russ Castronovo and Susan Gillman (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 148. I have elaborated elsewhere on the environmental, class, and gender dimensions to the violent conflicts that swept through Kenya in the aftermath of the December 2007 elections. The widespread, reductive media portraits of the violence as simply an eruption of “atavistic tribal hatreds” ignores the profound socioenvironmental inequalities that were masked by the official portrait of Kenya as a nation, under Moi’s successor, President Mwai Kibaki, of ascendant growth. See Rob Nixon, “Slow Violence, Gender, and the Environmentalism of the Poor,” *Journal of Commonwealth and Postcolonial Studies* 13 (2008): 29–31.
 60. Quoted in Ofeibe Quist-Arcton, “Maathai: Change Kenya to Benefit People,” <http://www.greenbeltmovement.org>.

5. Unimagined Communities

1. See especially Lawrine Platzky and Cheryl Walker, *The Surplus People: Forced Removals in South Africa* (Johannesburg: Ravan, 1998).
2. Quoted in Jacques Leslie, *Deep Water: The Epic Struggle over Dams, Displaced People, and the Environment* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005), 156.
3. On the basis of a country report by the World Commission on Dams, Arundhati Roy puts the figure for India’s dam-displaced at 56 million, while Patrick McCully argues that—prior to the Three Gorges project—Chinese dams alone may have displaced 60 million. See David Barsamian and Arundhati Roy, *The Checkbook and the Cruise Missile* (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2004), 25.
4. David Le Page, “World Bank Defends its Dam Policies,” *Mail and Guardian*, May 2, 2001, 7.
5. Rebecca Solnit, *Savage Dreams: A Journey into the Landscape Wars of the American West* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).
6. In *Savage Dreams*, Solnit commits herself to repopulating those places of cultural and imaginative evacuation. Her restorative ambitions are both temporal and spatial: she gives back to these deserts an environmental and cultural memory as well as connecting them globally, by tracing the cold-war links between Nevada and Kazakhstan. These links include new forms of imaginative awareness generated by a transnational protest movement.
7. Solnit, *Savage Dreams*, 154.
8. Across the world, the people who are reconstituted as uninhabitants seldom belong to large or powerful ethnic groups. This is true of all the desert nuclear test sites internationally: in the Nevada Test Site; in the deserts of Kazakhstan,

Pakistan, and India; in the Central Desert in Australia; the French test sites in preindependence Algeria; in western China; and in Southern Africa's Kalahari Desert. In all these areas, the people who are strategically recast as virtual uninhabitants are micro-minorities from marginalized ethnic groups. They are also very often nomads, people who traditionally have had to learn to live, through movement, within the limits of the land.

9. Quoted in Patrick McCully, *Silenced Rivers: The Ecology and Politics of Large Dams: Enlarged and Updated Edition* (London: Zed, 2001), 75.
10. *Ibid.*, 74–76.
11. Quoted in John McPhee, *Encounters with the Archdruid* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1971), 200.
12. *Ibid.*, 240.
13. Quoted in Susan Zakin, *Coyotes and Town Dogs: Earth First! and the Environmental Movement* (New York: Viking, 1993), 166.
14. Arundhati Roy, "The Greater Common Good," *The Cost of Living* (New York: Modern Library, 1999), 63.
15. Edward Abbey, *Desert Solitaire* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1968), 165.
16. Roy, *Cost of Living*, 93.
17. *Ibid.*, 106.
18. Wallace Stegner, *Where the Bluebird Sings to the Lemonade Springs: Living and Writing in the West* (New York: Random House), 75.
19. Roy, *Cost of Living*, ix. The Narmada Valley project has since been surpassed—both in the scale of its engineering and the scale of environmental calamity—by the Three Gorges Dam.
20. If the advent of the nuclear age has inspired a long tradition of activist polemic—from John Hersey, Jonathan Schell, Rebecca Solnit, and Rachel Carson to Kobo Abe, E. P. Thompson, and Martin Amis—the rise of the megadam has prompted a much more modest literature, largely associated (as I've suggested) with the wilderness ethic of the American West and, more recently, the Three Gorges Dam in China.
21. Roy, "The End of Imagination," 125.
22. William Finnegan, "The Economics of Empire: Notes on the Washington Consensus," *Harper's*, May 1, 2003, 53.
23. Arundhati Roy, *The God of Small Things* (New York: Random House, 1997), 14.
24. John Berger, "Ten Dispatches about Place," in *Hold Everything Dear: Dispatches on Survival and Resistance* (New York: Pantheon, 2007), 122–123.
25. Quoted in Roy, *Cost of Living*, 13.
26. C. V. J. Sharma, ed., *Modern Temples of India: Selected Speeches of Jawaharlal Nehru at Irrigation and Power Projects* (New Delhi: Central Board of Irrigation and Power, 1989), 40.

27. McCully estimates that 40 percent of oustees are Adivasis.
28. Quoted in Leslie, *Deep Water*, 54.
29. Regarding the rationalizing of irrational rivers, Maxim Gorky observed that Soviet dam builders sought to make “mad rivers sane” (quoted in McCully, *Silenced Rivers*, 17). The discourse of insanity is an insistent one, attached by megadam proponents to “wild” rivers and by opponents to the impact of damming on floodplains, deltas, and rates of flow and silting that result in longer and more catastrophic floods. Janet Abramovitz, for example, depicts the predictable 1993 floods of the Mississippi and Missouri rivers as a direct result of overdamming, providing “a dramatic and costly lesson on the effects of treating the natural flow of rivers as a pathological condition.” Abramovitz, *Imperiled Waters, Impoverished Future: The Decline of Freshwater Ecosystems*. (Washington, DC: Worldwatch Institute, 1996), 27
30. Marq de Villiers, *Water: The Fate of Our Most Precious Resource* (Boston: Mariner Books, 2001), 121.
31. Zeyev Volfson, writing in the 1970s under the pseudonym Boris Komarov, proclaimed that “there is far more important information about the history of hydro-electric construction in the USSR in Alexander Solzhenitsyn’s *Gulag Archipelago* than in all the textbooks on hydraulic engineering.” See Volfson, *The Destruction of Nature in the Soviet Union*, trans. Michel Vale and Joe Hollander (London: Pluto, 1980), 29.
32. See especially McCully, *Silenced Rivers*, 239ff.
33. John Waterbury, *Hydropolitics of the Nile Valley* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1979), 116. I am indebted to Patrick McCully for drawing my attention to this book.
34. On the impact of the Hoover Dam in unleashing a flood of international emulators, see especially de Villiers, *Water: The Fate of Our Most Precious Resource*, 120–128. Joan Didion, in the complex tones of the apocalyptic sublime, invoked the affective power of the Hoover Dam in her 1970 essay “At the Dam.” *The White Album* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1979), 198–201. For a stinging attack on “water-project boondoggles” in the American West, including megadams that fail to realize their promise, see Wallace Stegner’s fine essay “Striking the Rock,” in *Where the Bluebird Sings* (New York: Penguin, 1992), 76–98.
35. Decades later Hoover still had the power to terrorize the Soviets into playing catch-up.
36. Leslie, *Deep Water*, 117.
37. Quoted in Sharma, ed., *Modern Temples of India*, 52–56.
38. Arundhati Roy, *Power Politics* (Cambridge, MA: South End Press), 43.
39. See, for example, her critique of “a corporate globalization [that] has increased the distance between the people who take decisions and the people who have

- to suffer those decisions” (Barsamian and Roy, *The Checkbook and the Cruise Missile*, 73).
40. Roy, *Power Politics*, 32.
 41. *Ibid.*, 32.
 42. See Leslie, *Deep Water*, 20; and Ramachandra Guha, “The Arun Shourine of the Left,” *The Hindu*, December 10, 2000. Even before her nonfictional turn, Roy was no stranger to controversy. The intercaste relationship in *The God of Small Things* resulted in Roy being charged with obscenity, and Kerala’s Communist Party railed against her fictional depiction of local Marxist history. She was taken to court for “corrupting public morality.” Aijaz Ahmed, though admiring of the novel’s style and ambition, takes Roy to task for her depiction of Left history and for the novel’s reliance on an erotic plotting of the political. See Ahmed, “Reading Arundhati Roy Politically,” *Frontline* 14 (August 8, 1997): 103–111.
 43. George Perkins Marsh, *Man and Nature: Physical Geography as Modified By Human Action* (1864; rpt. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Library, 2001), 27.
 44. McCully, *Silenced Rivers*, 174. In *The Cost of Living*, Roy acknowledges McCully’s incomparable book as “the rock on which this work stands.”
 45. Roy, *Cost of Living*, 123.
 46. Vandana Shiva, *Water Wars: Privatization, Pollution, Profit* (Boston: South End Press, 2002), 15.
 47. “Frontline: The World of Water,” BBC2, March 28, 2009.
 48. Al Gedicks, *Resource Rebels. Native Challenges to Mining and Oil Corporations* (Boston: South End Press, 20010), 8–10.

6. Stranger in the Eco-village

1. My use of the term postapartheid in this chapter comes with all the familiar caveats. The nation’s democratic turn on April 27, 1994 was a critical marker in South African history. But “surely,” Njabulo Ndebele correctly insists, “the death of apartheid is a social process not an event.” (*Fine Lines from the Box: Further Thoughts About Our Country* (Roggebaai, South Africa: Umuzi, 2007), 93). That process is uneven and ongoing. This chapter is, in part, an attempt to explore from the angle of environmental justice the limits and pacing of that systemic transformation.
2. Njabulo S. Ndebele, “Game Lodges and Leisure Colonialists,” in *Blank: Architecture After Apartheid*, ed. Hilton Judin and Ivan Vladislavic (Cape Town: David Phillips, 1998), 12.
3. Taxidermy is located at the complex crossroads of Enlightenment science, colonial trophy hunting, and hypermasculine interior design. Taxidermal time is, in multiple senses, suspended time: the mounted corpses are frozen in animated

- positions, usually (for predators) with fangs exposed. The period reference is anachronistic as is the craft itself, which projects a musty, neo-Victorian aura of white male risk-management.
4. African culture, of whatever ethnicity, was present only in the interior atmospherics: the reed baskets and masks that afforded the game lodge lobby a decorative indigeneity.
 5. The Eastern Cape is primarily a Xhosa region. It has very few Zulu inhabitants. But Kleinhans understood that Zulu had greater international recognition value, in the push for African authenticity, than Xhosa. Besides, Zulu was easier for foreigners to pronounce.
 6. Donna Haraway, "Teddy Bear Patriarchy: Taxidermy in the Garden of Eden, New York City, 1908–1936," *Social Text* 11 (1984): 20–64.
 7. The cultural histories of game lodges dedicated to game viewing, private reserves where hunting is part of the experience, and national parks are all differently inflected. Although a full accounting of those differences is beyond the scope of this chapter, performances of the eco-archaic and racialized ecologies of looking remain, I believe, a constitutive element in all those varied spaces.
 8. Ndebele, "Game Lodges and Leisure Colonialists," 12.
 9. Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 244–245.
 10. For an insightful examination of the spatial politics of Ndebele's essay, see Rita Barnard, *Apartheid and Beyond: South African Writers and the Politics of Place* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 171–172.
 11. One of the most notorious of these forced removals in the name of conservation involved the Makuleke when the Kruger National Park was extended northward. Another controversial case involved the Tonga, who were moved twice: in 1924 to make way for the Ndumo Game Reserve, then again in the 1990s to create a corridor that would give elephants greater freedom of movement and access to water which, accordingly, became more difficult for the Tonga to access. Martha Honey, *Ecotourism and Sustainable Development: Who Owns Paradise?* (Washington, DC: Island Press, 1999), 367. For a broader, international perspective on conservation refugees, see especially Ramachandra Guha, *Environmentalism: A Global History* (New York: Longman, 2000); and Mark Dowie, *Conservation Refugees* (Boston: MIT Press, 2009).
 12. Ndebele, "Game Lodges and Leisure Colonialists," 11.
 13. Fritz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Charles Lam Markmann (London: Pluto, 1991), 90, 92.
 14. Ndebele, "Game Lodges and Leisure Colonialists," 13.
 15. Njabulo S. Ndebele, *Rediscovery of the Ordinary: Essays on South African Literature and Culture* (Johannesburg: COSAW, 1991), 67.

16. Ndebele, "Game Lodges and Leisure Colonialists," 10. On her flight back from her Bahamas vacation, Jordan is likewise "burning up," on the verge of what she calls "a West Indian fit." "Report from the Bahamas," in *A Stranger in the Village: Two Centuries of African-American Travel Writing*, ed. Farah J. Griffin and Cheryl J. Fish (Boston: Beacon Press, 1998), 326.
17. On the role of effaced labor in landscape aesthetics, Raymond Williams's *The Country and the City* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975) and J. M. Coetzee's *White Writing* (1988; repr., New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990) remain invaluable. William Cronon's related work in an American context remains foundational, while Robert Marzec's analyses of effaced labor, landscape, and enclosures in British and postcolonial environments are incisive. See Robert Marzec, *An Ecological and Postcolonial Study of Literature: From Daniel Defore to Salman Rushdie* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).
18. Jordan, "Report from the Bahamas," 327.
19. Kincaid, *In a Small Place* (New York: Plume, 1988), 55.
20. Ndebele, "Game Lodges and Leisure Colonialists," 12.
21. The environmentalist literature on the construction of Caribbean Edens is rich and increasingly vast. See especially *Caribbean Literature and the Environment: Between Nature and Culture*, ed. Elizabeth DeLoughrey et al. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2007); George B. Handley, *New World Poetics: Nature and the Adamic Imagination of Whitman, Neruda, and Walcott* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2007); and Sarah Phillips Casteel, *Second Arrivals: Landscape and Belonging in Contemporary Writing of the Americas* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2007).
22. *South African Eden*, James Stevenson-Hamilton's influential memoir on his Kruger Park years appeared in 1937, the same year as Karen Blixen's *Out of Africa*. Both books invoked an elegiac, Edenic rhetoric to help mobilize a megafauna-centered conservationist movement whose legacy continues to shape the contemporary economic and cultural landscapes of South African and Kenya. Stevenson-Hamilton, a Scottish immigrant (and the Kruger Park's first warden), was arguably as pivotal a figure, through his actions and writings, in the shaping of South African conservation as that other Scottish immigrant conservationist, John Muir, was in the United States.
23. See especially Elaine Freedgood, *Victorian Writing about Risk* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2000).
24. James Baldwin, "Stranger in the Village," in *Notes of a Native Son* (1953; rpt. Boston: Beacon Press, 1984), 159.
25. *Ibid.*
26. *Ibid.*, 164.
27. Baldwin's position here bears comparison with Jordan's reflections on "The Native Show on the Patio" performed at the Sheraton British Colonial. Her

- racial and gender identification with the Bahamian women who perform in the “Native Show,” who serve her, or hawk trinkets on the street is compromised by the structures of the tourist industry: “We are not particularly women anymore; we are parties to a transaction designed to set us against each other” (Jordan, “Report from the Bahamas,” 321).
28. This is not to suggest that the relationship between local white ideologies and foreign ones always dovetail. Ndebele mentions, for instance, an American family who remark on the oddity of cross-dressing as “leisure colonialists.” Ndebele, “Game Lodges and Leisure Colonialists,” 12.
 29. Amitava Kumar, *Bombay-London-New York* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 64.
 30. Baldwin, “Stranger in the Village,” 169.
 31. *Ibid.*, 173.
 32. Clearly, the postapartheid redistribution of political, economic, and cultural power remains profoundly uneven.
 33. *Ibid.*, 175.
 34. The routine comparison of Kruger with Israel reaffirms the park’s status, particularly in Afrikaner cultures of nature, as a place of spiritual pilgrimage, a chosen people’s chosen land. Kruger Park was officially established under the 1926 National Parks Act, although it was then much smaller than its current size.
 35. The status of the Kruger Park as an overdetermined buffer zone was intensified by the ascent to power of Marxist guerillas in 1975, an event that marked the end of Portuguese colonial control of Mozambique and served, in addition, as a partial revolutionary inspiration for the Soweto uprising the following year. During the ensuing Mozambican civil war, the apartheid regime deemed Mozambique (which served as a base for ANC guerillas) a terrorist state. The South African regime, with strong backing from the Reagan administration, funded, trained, harbored, and armed forces opposing the Mozambican government. By the late 1980s, the civil war had displaced 2 million of Mozambique’s 14 million people and killed 100,000 of them.
 36. Gordimer’s compelling essay on the Kruger Park-Mozambique border zone, “The Ingot and the Stick,” seems to have passed under the critical radar. It goes unmentioned both in Stephen Clingman’s extensive critical work on Gordimer and in Ronald Roberts’s 750-page biography of her.
 37. Jane Carruthers, *The Kruger National Park: A Social and Political History* (Pietermaritzburg, South Africa: University of Natal Press, 1995), 17.
 38. *Ibid.*, 31.
 39. After the discovery of gold in 1877, white immigration to the Transvaal surged. The resultant rapid ascent of industrialization and urbanization in turn fed the rise of commercial agriculture. White mining magnates and white farmers were thrust into competition with each other for scarce black labor. Waves

of legislation were passed intent of making rural survival more precarious for black subsistence communities, thereby forcing increasing numbers into capitalist wage-labor on the mines and farms. The 1913 Land Act was particularly devastating, barring blacks from buying or leasing land from whites except in the designated native reserves. From a white ruling-class perspective, this land squeeze had the double advantage of forcing blacks into wage labor and removing a source of agricultural competition. For a more textured history of these developments, see William Beinart, *The Rise of Conservation in South Africa: Settlers, Livestock, and the Environment 1770–1950* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008). Although it is beyond the scope of this chapter, a fuller accounting of the rise of game reserves in relation to colonial cultures of labor and leisure would engage J. M. Coetzee's reflections on idleness in *White Writing* (1988; rpt. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990) and Syed Hussein Alata's *The Myth of the Lazy Native* (New York: Routledge, 1977).

40. This poacher-conservationist dyad helps explain an erratic policy toward human habitation inside the Kruger National Park. After initially barring Africans from the park in the early twentieth century, the white authorities allowed about 3,000 Africans to reside there, but charged them rent (Carruthers, *Kruger National Park*, 81). This rent provided a revenue stream and ensured that those residents would be forced to sell their labor for menial amounts. Black bodies—of African renters and, later, prison gangs—were dragooned into erecting fences, building roads and camps, and catching poachers. The invention and maintenance of a wild, Edenic purity is, after all, a labor-intensive business.
41. Relevant here is Johannes Fabian's account of the two primary colonial responses to the bodily contest over land: forced removal (whether through genocide or deportation) or manipulating "the other variable—Time. With the help of various devices of sequencing and distancing one assigns to the conquered populations a different Time." Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 29–30.
42. Carruthers, *Kruger National Park*, 86.
43. Labuschagne, 26–27; 63–64. Quoted in Carruthers, *Kruger National Park*, 83.
44. For a suggestive history of the way the Grand Canyon was marketed to American tourists as a destination associated with the religious archaic, the sublime, and patriotic spiritual elevation, see Stephen J. Pyne, *How the Canyon Became Grand* (New York: Viking, 1998).
45. Gordimer's essay "The Ingot and the Stick" is a companion piece to a BBC2 television documentary she presented as part of a series on frontiers. Gordimer, "The Ingot and the Stick, The Ingot and the Gun: Mozambique-South Africa," in *Frontiers*, ed. George Carey (London: BBC Books, 1990), 50–77.

46. “The principle of the agreements has never changed. Gold and other mining interests in South Africa are granted large-scale labour recruiting of Mozambican men in return for a portion of the men’s wages to be paid in gold, to Portugal during colonial times, later to independent Mozambique.” *Ibid.*, 56.
47. *Ibid.*, 61.
48. Gordimer, “The Ultimate Safari,” in *Telling Tales*, ed. Nadine Gordimer (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2004), 272.
49. *Ibid.*, 273.
50. *Ibid.*, 271, 277.
51. *Ibid.*, 281.
52. Gloria Alzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (San Francisco: Aunt Lute, 1987), 3.
53. In a broader theoretical context, Liisa Malkki’s work on the pathologizing of refugees as “unnatural” has a particular resonance here. See her *Purity and Exile: Violence, Memory, and National Cosmology among Hutu Refugees in Tanzania* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).
54. The girl’s ethnicity goes unmentioned, but the story contains plenty of geographical and linguistic indications that she is Shangaan. (The Shangaan’s ethnic self-designation has varied historically and geographically. Shangaan are frequently called Tsonga in South Africa.)
55. Gordimer, “The Ultimate Safari,” 280.
56. Before Zimbabwe’s descent into chaos shrank the ambitions of the project, a three-nation transfrontier park was in the works, joining Kruger to national parks in Mozambique and Zimbabwe and thereby affording the prospect of greater freedom of movement for humans (exclusive subspecies, tourist) and other mammalian herds. The project has been dogged by controversy, not least because it would entail further involuntary removals (notably in Mozambique) and the economic benefits to local inhabitants have been at best hazily sketched out. The status of this transfrontier park, dubbed an African “super park,” remains uncertain, although the corridor linking Mozambique and Kruger appears to be going ahead.
57. From the Kruger Park’s colonial beginnings, the “gate guards” were historically Shangaan. As David Bunn notes, these uniformed guards “dramatize[d] two orders of time and racial identity—one that of the ‘improved’ native and the other that of the customary, ethnic collective—that [could not] easily coexist outside the boundaries of the reserve.” Bunn, “Relocations: Landscape Theory, South African Landscape Practice, and the Transmission of Political Value,” *Pretexts* 4 (1993): 53.
58. For a thoughtful contrastive analysis of the treatment of white tourists and African immigrants, see Kathryn Mathers and Loren B. Landau, “Tourists

- or 'Makwerekwere': Good Versus Bad Visitors and the Possibilities of Ethical Tourism in South Africa" (paper presented to the International Sociological Association Congress Durban, South Africa, July 2006, Forced Migration Working Paper Series #27, Forced Migration Studies Programme, University of Witwatersrand), 1–16.
59. Hector Magome and James Murombedzi, "Sharing South African National Parks: Community Land and Conservation in a Democratic South Africa," in *Decolonizing Nature: Strategies for Conservation in a Post-Colonial Era*, ed. William M. Adams and Martin Mulligan (London: Earthscan, 2003), 131.
60. For instance, the range of endemics in the vast Kruger National Park cannot compare with that of a seldom-visited, much smaller reserve on the Namaqualand coast that is biodiversity rich but megafauna poor. One notes also how, in a creative attempt to legitimate and market its expansion, the Greater Addo National Park has pitched itself as the only park in the world to boast the Big Seven (adding the southern right whale and the great white shark to the conventional lion, elephant, rhino, buffalo, and leopard) while also boasting that it has the greatest variety of biomes of any South African national park.
61. Tsing, *Friction*, 1.
62. Ndebele, "Game Lodges and Leisure Colonialists," 14.

7. Ecologies of the Aftermath

1. Paul Virilio, interviewed in James DerDerian, *Virtuous War: Mapping the Military-Industrial-Media-Entertainment Network* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2001), 64–65.
2. *Ibid.*
3. By (among others) Robert Hughes on the back cover of *Martyr's Day*.
4. Mike Kelly, *Martyr's Day: Chronicle of a Small War* (1993; repr., New York: Random House, 2001), 229.
5. *Ibid.*
6. Carol Picou, "Living with Gulf War Syndrome," in *Metal of Dishonor*, ed. John Catalinotto and Sara Flounders (New York: International Action Center, 1997), 44–45.
7. Akira Tashiro, *Discounted Casualties: The Human Cost of Depleted Uranium*, trans. Transnet (Hiroshima: Chugoku Shimbun, 2001), 94–95.
8. *Ibid.*
9. Picou, *Metal of Dishonor*, 46.
10. The best account of the role the Gulf War played in exorcising Vietnam syndrome is to be found in Andrew J. Bacevich, *The New American Militarism: How Americans are Seduced by War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).
11. Kelly, *Martyr's Day*, 362.

12. Mike Kelly, *Martyr's Day: Chronicle of a Small War*, 2nd ed. (New York: Vintage Books, 2001), xiii. In the foreword to the 2001 edition of *Martyr's Day*, Kelly qualifies his surgical metaphor, but only by arguing, like many hawks, for a spurious connection between Saddam Hussein and the 9/11 attacks. Desert Storm, Kelly now insists, was a war of mistaken brevity, as the United States' failure to topple Saddam had opened the way for the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.
13. For Kelly there are two levels of surgery in the "theatre" of the war: the local, surgical strikes—the small, precise incisions—within the larger clinical performance of the surgical war itself.
14. See also, for example, Fred Smoler on the Iraq War of 2003: "Why were civilian casualties so low? In part because of the self-restraint—with a few exceptions—shown by Coalition troops and in part due to a technological revolution, the use of precision-guided munitions, particularly GPS-guided munitions, in unprecedented quantities." Smoler, "Cakewalk: Getting It Wrong—U.S. Military Might and Myths," *Dissent* 47 (Summer 2003): 39.
15. Tashiro, *Discounted Casualties*.
16. Military usages of surgical metaphors are not unique to the Gulf War, of course. Consider, for instance, the American general who during the 2003 Iraq War declared that "we need to make a decision on when the cancer of Fallujah needs to be cut out." Quoted in Eliot Weinberger, *What I Heard About Iraq* (London: Verso, 2005), 9. However, what is particularly acute in Kelly's book is his representation of the entire war as surgical in its efficient, healing, and ethical brevity.
17. Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring* (1962; repr., Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1992), 127.
18. Showalter argues that "hysteria not only survives in the 1990s, it is more contagious than in the past. Infectious epidemics of hysteria spread by stories circulated through self-help books, articles in newspapers and magazines, TV talk shows and series, films, the Internet, even literary criticism." *Hystories: Hysterical Epidemics and Modern Media* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 5.
19. *Ibid.*, 6.
20. As one anonymous commentator notes on Amazon.com: "had Showalter's book been written at the turn of the [nineteenth] century, she would have included multiple sclerosis (once known as 'faker's disease') among her list of 'hysterias.'"
 21. Showalter, *Hystories*, 4.
 22. Steven Reinberg, "Toxic Chemical Blamed for Gulf War Illness," *U.S. News & World Report*, November 17, 2008, 5.
 23. *Ibid.*

24. Duncan Graham-Rowe, "Depleted Uranium Casts Shadow Over Peace in Iraq," *New Scientist*, April 15, 2003, 2.
25. Thomas Whiteside's *The Withering Rain: America's Herbicidal Folly* (New York: Dutton, 1971); and John Lewallen, *Ecology of Devastation* (New York: Puffin, 1971).
26. Harvey Wasserman and Norman Solomon, *Killing Our Own: The Disaster of America's Experience with Atomic Radiation* (New York: Delacorte, 1982).
27. See Robert Fisk, "The Evidence Lies Dying in Basra," *Independent*, January 25, 2000, 11; and Patsy McGary, "Iraqi Child Cancers Link to Gulf War Weapons," *Irish Times*, November 30, 1999, 2.
28. Quoted in Dan Fahey, "The Use of Depleted Uranium in the 2003 Iraq War: An Initial Assessment of Information and Policies," www.wise-uranium.org.
29. *Ibid.* See also U.S. General Accounting Office, *Hazardous Waste: Information on Potential Superfund Sites*, GAO/RCED-99-22 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1998), 170; Michael Orey, "Uranium Waste Site Has a Historic New England Town Up in Arms," *Wall Street Journal*, March 1, 2001, B1; Jesse D. Edmands et al., "Uptake and Mobility of Uranium in Black Oaks: Implications for Biomonitoring Depleted Uranium-Contaminated Groundwater," *Chemosphere* (2001) 44: 789–795.
30. For an incomparably astute analysis of language as an instrument of warfare, see Mary Louise Pratt, "Harm's Way: Language and the Contemporary Arts of War," *PMLA* 124 (2009), 1515–1531.
31. Quoted in Tashiro, *Discounted Casualties*, 56–57.
32. *Ibid.*
33. Doug Rokke, interview by Rob Nixon, July 7, 2005.
34. Quoted in Hillary Johnson, "Is the Pentagon Giving Our Soldiers Cancer?" *Rolling Stone*, October 2, 2003, 83.
35. *Ibid.*
36. Quoted in David Rose, "Weapons of Self-Destruction," *Vanity Fair*, December 2004, 217.
37. Quoted in Johnson, "Is the Pentagon Giving Our Soldiers Cancer?" 87. Naughton's reference here to tungsten is pointed: the German military had banned depleted uranium from its arsenal on account of the radioactive and chemical risks it posed, replacing DU with tungsten, a high-density (and more expensive) metal that proved effective both as a penetrator and in the armoring of tanks.
38. Doug Rokke, interview by Rob Nixon, July 7, 2005. If four years after the war Rokke had 432 micrograms of uranium per liter of urine, after eight years that figure had dropped to 42 micrograms. But as Rokke pointed out, that drop didn't mean his body had eliminated the rest but rather that, over time, much of that uranium had become sequestered in his soft organs and bones.

39. Ibid.
40. Leonard Dietz, "DU Spread and Contamination of Gulf War Veterans and Others," in *Metal of Dishonor*, ed. John Catalinotto and Sara Flounders (New York: International Action Center, 1997; rev. ed. 1999), 134.
41. Avril McDonald, ed., *The International Legal Regulation of the Use of Depleted Uranium Weapons* (Den Haag, 2005), especially the essay "Environmental and Health Consequences of DU Munitions," 173–192.
42. See Duncan Graham-Rowe, "Depleted Uranium Casts Shadow Over Peace in Iraq," *New Scientist*, April 15, 2003, 2–6. See also, "Special Report: Waging a New Kind of War," *Scientific American*, June 2000, 2–17.
43. Sara Flounders, "Iraqi Cities 'Hot' with Depleted Uranium," <http://www.coastalpost.com/03/09/11.htm>. For the full story, see Scott Peterson, "Remains of Toxic Bullets Litter Iraq," *Christian Science Monitor*, May 15, 2003, 3.
44. Ibid.
45. Quoted in Dan Fahey, "Science or Science Fiction? Facts, Myths and Propaganda in the Debate Over Depleted Uranium Weapons," 31.
46. Quoted in Rose, "Weapons of Self-Destruction," 219.
47. Bonham et al., *Human Cost of the War in Iraq*, 22.
48. Quoted in Johnson, "Is the Pentagon giving Our Soldiers Cancer?" 93.
49. Ibid.
50. Rabadrinath Tagore, "Persia, April 13, 1934," in *Rabadrinath Tagore: An Anthology*, ed. Krishna Dutta and Andrew Robinson (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 127.
51. Walt Whitman, "Drum-Taps," in *Whitman, The Complete Poems*, ed. Francis Murphy (New York: Penguin, 2005), 305.
52. Quoted in Weinberger, *What I Heard About Iraq*, 3.
53. The other most vocal defendant of cluster bombs has been Russia during the war in Chechnya.
54. Quoted in *Clearing the Fields: Solutions to the Global Landmines Crisis*, ed. Kevin M. Cahill (New York: New Press, 1996), 3.
55. Quoted Richard Norton-Taylor, "Rights Groups Warn of Danger of Unexploded Cluster Bombs," *Guardian*, August 18, 2006, 7.
56. Woodford Agee Heflin, *United States Air Force Dictionary*, <http://www.knovel.com>.
57. "Personnel," <http://www.websters-online-dictionary.org>.
58. Bonnie Docherty, *Human Rights Watch* 14, no. 7 (2002): 44.
59. Robert Fisk, "Wailing Children, the Wounded, the Dead: Victims of the Day Cluster Bombs Rained on Baghdad," *Independent*, April 13, 2003, 5.
60. Lydia Monin and Andrew Gallimore, *The Devil's Garden: A History of Landmines* (London: Random House, 2002).

61. Eric Prokosch, *The Technology of Killing: A Military and Political History of Antipersonnel Weapons* (New York: Zed, 1995), 173.
62. Henry Michaels, *US Uses Cluster Bombs to Spread Death and Destruction in Iraq*, World Socialist Web Site, <http://www.wsws.org>.
63. Quoted in Cahill, ed., *Clearing the Fields*, 192.
64. Human Rights Watch, *Off Target: The Conduct of the War and Civilian Casualties in Iraq* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2003), 73.
65. Human Rights Watch, *Off Target*, 17. See also Kenneth Rutherford, “The Evolving Arm Control Agenda: The Implications of the Role of NGOs in Banning Anti-Personnel Landmines,” *World Politics* 53 (October 2000): 74–114.
66. Human Rights Watch, *New U.S. Landmine Policy: Questions and Answers* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2004), 13.

8. Environmentalism, Postcolonialism, and American Studies

1. One thinks here of innovative works like Richard Grove, *Green Imperialism: Colonial Expansion, Tropical Island Edens, and the Origins of Environmentalism, 1600–1860* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Tom Griffiths and Libby Robin, eds., *Ecology and Empire: Environmental History of Settler Societies* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997); David Arnold and Ramachandra Guha, eds., *Nature, Culture, Imperialism: Essays of the Environmental History of South Asia* (Delhi, India: Oxford University Press, 1995); William Beinart and Peter Coates, *Environment and History: The Taming of Nature in the USA and South Africa* (London: Routledge, 1995); and Susan M. Darlington et al., *Nature in the Global South* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003). For an excellent recent examination of the possibilities that debates in cultural geography might open up for a postcolonial ecocriticism, see Upamanyu Pablo Mukherjee, *Postcolonial Environments: Nature, Culture and the Contemporary Indian Novel in English* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).
2. Jay Parini, “The Greening of the Humanities,” *New York Times Magazine*, October 23, 1995, 52–53.
3. Rob Nixon, “The Oil Weapon,” *New York Times*, November 17, 1995, A24. See also my essay, “Pipedreams: Ken Saro-Wiwa, Environmental Justice, and Micro-Minority Rights” *London Review of Books*, April 7, 1996, 11.
4. Lawrence Buell, *The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing, and the Formation of American Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996); Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm, eds., *The Ecocritical Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1996); Max Oelschlaeger, *The Idea of Wilderness* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1991); Daniel Payne, *Voices in the Wilderness: American Nature Writing and Environmental*

Politics (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1996); Scott Slovic, *Seeking Awareness in American Nature Writing* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1992).

No book illustrates the limitations of this approach more lucidly than *The Idea of Wilderness*, in which Oelschlaeger argues for the timeless, primal, universal value of wilderness. He roots his argument in ruminations on Paleolithic, Neolithic, and ancient Mediterranean notions of nature, then seeks to secure his case by analyzing an exclusively American canon of writers (Thoreau, Muir, Leopold, Jeffers, and Snyder prominent among them).

5. Ken Saro-Wiwa, *Nigeria: The Brink of Disaster* (Port Harcourt, Nigeria: Saros International Publishers, 1991), 71.
6. Ken Saro-Wiwa, *A Month and A Day: A Detention Diary* (London: Penguin, 1995), 7.
7. *Ibid.*, 80.
8. *Ibid.*, 79.
9. For a prescient postcolonial challenge to the American wilderness obsession, see Ramachandra Guha, "Radical American Environmentalism and Wilderness Preservation: A Third World Critique," *Environmental Ethics* 11 (Spring 1989): 71–83.
10. For an invaluable critique of the wilderness tradition of "purity," see William Cronon, "The Trouble with Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature," in *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature*, ed. William Cronon (New York: Norton, 1996), 69–90. Since Cronon's pathbreaking essay, other ecocritics and environmental writers have recognized how a fixation with wilderness is imaginatively distorting and politically costly. However, the legacy of the wilderness obsession remains a continued source of suspicion for writers and communities who in the past have felt alienated by that emphasis.
11. For an insightful essay on the possibility of reconciling cosmopolitanism with a located patriotism, see Kwame Anthony Appiah, "Cosmopolitan Patriots," *Critical Inquiry* 97 (1997): 129–144.
12. J. M. Coetzee, *White Writing* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990), 62.
13. Donald E. Pease, "National Identities, Postmodern Artifacts, and Postnational Narratives," in *National Identities and Post-Americanist Narratives*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1994), 4.
14. For an excellent discussion of the dangers of an excessive preoccupation with displacement, see Amitava Kumar, *Passport Photos* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 13–14. See also Ian Buruma, "The Romance of Exile," *New Republic*, February 12, 2001, 23–30.
15. Parini, "The Greening of the Humanities," 53.
16. *Ibid.*, 53.

17. Ibid.
18. On Abbey's anti-immigrant environmentalism, which became more prominent in his later years, see Rick Scarce, *Eco-Warriors: Understanding the Radical Environmental Movement* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 92. For Austin's anti-Semitism, see Tom Athanasiou, *Divided Planet: The Ecology of Rich and Poor* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1996), 297. At the crossroads where environmentalism and immigration politics meet, we continue to encounter what Betsy Hartmann has called "the greening of hate." To commemorate the fortieth anniversary of Earth Day in April 2010, the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR), a driving force behind Arizona's notorious Senate Bill 1070, issued a fifty-three-page report, "The Environmentalist's Guide to a Sensible Immigration Policy." As Andrew Ross recounts, FAIR—and allied groups like the Center for Immigration Studies—have actively sought to build a green anti-immigrant constituency, dividing the environmental movement. FAIR spin blames undocumented immigrants for everything from biodiversity loss and wilderness desecration to accelerating climate change and increased greenhouse emissions. A Center for Immigration Studies press release, urging more draconian enforcement in southern Arizona's national forests deploys the standard coupling of immigration and impurity: "How long will these beautiful lands remain unspoiled if the border is not secured?" Andrew Ross, "Greenwashing Nativism," *The Nation*, August 16, 2010, 6.
19. Richard Rodriguez, *Days of Obligation: An Argument with My Mexican Father* (New York: Penguin, 1992), 5.
20. Quoted in Kirkpatrick Sale, "The Forest for the Trees: Can Today's Environmentalists Tell the Difference," *Mother Jones* 11, no. 8 (1986): 36.
21. D. H. Lawrence, *Selected Poems* (London: Penguin, 1972), 93.
22. Rick Bass, "A Landscape of Possibility," *Outside* (December 1995): 100–101.
23. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *The Post-Colonial Critic: Interviews, Strategies, Dialogues* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 72.
24. Aldo Leopold, "Game and Wildlife Conservation," in *Game Management* (1933; repr., Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1986), 23.
25. Jennifer Oladipo, "Global Warming is Colorblind," *Orion*, November/December 2007: 5.
26. For two brilliant accounts of this process, see Rebecca Solnit, *Savage Dreams: A Journey into the Landscape Wars of the American West* (New York: 1994), 215–385; and Mark Dowie, *Conservation Refugees* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2009), 1–22.
27. Richard Rodriguez, "True West," in *The Anchor Essay Annual: The Best of 1997*, ed. Phillip Lopate, (New York, 1998), 331.
28. Melvin Dixon, *Ride Out the Wilderness: Geography and Identity in Afro-American Literature* (Urbana-Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1987).

29. Camille T. Dungy, "Writing Home," in Camille T. Dungy, ed., *Black Nature. : Four Centuries of African American Nature* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2009), 285.
30. University of California, Berkeley, "Black Nature: A Symposium on the First Anthology of Nature Writing by African-American Poets" (video of panel discussion, March 5, 2010), YouTube.com, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bkBs81CUcpg> (accessed April 29, 2010). I'm grateful to Jalylah Burrell for alerting me to this panel discussion of the *Black Nature* anthology.
31. Richard Mabey, *Landlocked: In Pursuit of the Wild* (London: Sinclair Stevenson, 1994), 71.
32. Raymond Williams, *Toward 2000* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1983), 195. For a related perspective on community and place, see Williams, "Homespun Philosophy," *New Statesman and Society*, June 19, 1992, 8–9.
33. Williams, *Toward 2000*, 195.
34. *Ibid.*, 195.
35. Paul Gilroy, *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack* (London: Hutchinson, 1987), 49–50. Stuart Hall questions Williams' prioritizing of rooted settlements in similar terms. See Hall, "Our Mongrel Selves," *New Statesman and Society*, June 19, 1992, 6–7.
36. An early, important resource on environmental writing beyond the United States is Patrick Murphy's *Literature of Nature: An International Sourcebook* (Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn, 1998). Scott Slovic has sought to counter the complaint that "environmental literature is an exclusively Americanist preserve" by pointing, among other things, to the rise in international submissions to the premier journal in the field, *ISLE: Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment*. This is, indeed, a promising development, but the subjects and authors of environmental literary criticism remain overwhelmingly American. The internationalizing of ecocriticism, moreover, should not simply involve additive diversification in a center-periphery fashion. As I've argued above, we need to address the way ecocriticism's dominant models and intellectual priorities remain skewed by their American genesis. See Slovic, "Forum on Literatures of the Environment," *PMLA* 114 (Oct. 1999), 1102.
37. Scott Russell Sanders, "Staying Put," in *The Future of Nature: Writing on a Human Ecology*, ed. Barry Lopez (Minneapolis: Milkweed, 2007), 353–367. This essay has been adapted from Sanders' book-length polemic on this subject, *Staying Put. Making a Home in a Restless World* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993).
38. *Ibid.*, 357.
39. I am (to use a loaded word) a "naturalized" U.S. citizen who has lived in the Midwest for thirteen of my twenty-six American years. As such, I am sympathetic to some of Sanders' regional prickliness: bicoastal and transatlantic condescension toward (and ignorance of) the Midwest remains tenacious.

40. One exception to the dearth of minority writers and public intellectuals domiciled in rural England has been V. S. Naipaul, for whom Wiltshire has served primarily as a launching pad for his international travels and as a hermitic place to write. Certainly, to judge from *The Enigma of Arrival* and Patrick French's biography of him, Naipaul never entered into the kind of community-minded engagements that Sanders associates with staying put. Moreover, Naipaul has been a renter, not a rural landowner of the kind that Sanders, Leopold, and Berry extol.
41. Sanders, "Staying Put," 356.
42. *Ibid.*, 362.
43. *Ibid.*, 365.
44. Raymond Williams' *The Country and the City* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973) remains the most wide-ranging account of the English pastoral tradition.
45. For an eloquent and economical account of the relationship between wilderness thinking and Indian dispossession in the United States, see Cronon, "The Trouble with Wilderness," 95–96.
46. Rob Nixon, *London Calling: V. S. Naipaul, Postcolonial Mandarin* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 161. For a luminous analysis of postcolonial pastoral in a Caribbean context, see Sarah Phillips Casteel, *Second Arrivals: Landscape and Belonging in Contemporary Writing of the Americas* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2007). Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin have also productively carried forward this line of thinking in *Postcolonial Ecocriticism: Literature, Animals, Environment* (London: Routledge, 2010).
47. V. S. Naipaul, *The Enigma of Arrival* (New York: Knopf, 1987).
48. Richard Drayton, *Nature's Government: Science, Imperial Britain, and the "Improvement" of the World* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), xvi.
49. Jamaica Kincaid, *My Garden* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2001), 132.
50. *Ibid.*, 139.
51. Jamaica Kincaid, *A Small Place* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1988).
52. *Ibid.*, 16.
53. E. M. Forster, *Howard's End* (1910; repr., New York, 1975). This is an illuminating novel to read alongside the Naipaul and the Kincaid. Although imperial spaces trouble the edges of *Howard's End*, Forster anxiously seeks to screen out their implications by advancing a pastorally contained vision of English regeneration. In a key scene, the narrator stands on a Dorset hilltop gazing down at what he defines as a quintessential English vista. His angle of vision is akin to what Mary Louise Pratt, in an imperial context, calls the monarch-of-all-I-survey. In keeping with this tradition, Forster's method is panoramic: he creates a verbal painting that allows him to symbolically consume all of England at a glance in

the surrogate, pastoral form of the Isle of Wight. Gazing steadfastly at the Isle of Wight “the imagination swells, spreads, and deepens, until it becomes geographical and encircles England” (102). This scene’s visual geometry, one might say, is one of panoramic bioregionalism.

In this passage, the Isle of Wight, with its grassy downs and chalky cliffs, becomes England’s epitome and the guardian “till the end of time” of the nation’s “purity.” This act of synecdoche shrinks England to a nonhybrid nation of hyperpastoral. Forster thus performs here a kind of political and spatial amnesia, using a visual act of geographical circumscription to generate a highly selective notion of nationhood. By having the Isle of Wight stand in for England, Forster excludes the working classes and the polluted cities of the nation’s industrial north, as well as London, with its expansive cosmopolitan matrices. Crucially, for my larger argument about postcolonial pastoral, Forster’s vision excises colonial space from the idea of England: Cyprus and Nigeria, flickering on the edges of the novel, have no visible relation to the Isle of Wight. In this manner, Forster deploys geographical synecdoche and panoramic pastoral to foreclose from the idea of England, people, places, and histories that unsettle the book’s project of selective national regeneration and redefinition.

54. Kincaid, *My Garden*, 142.
55. For some fine insights into the relationship between botany and colonialism in Kincaid’s work, see Rachel Azima, “‘Not-the-Native’: Self-Transplantation, Ecocriticism, and Postcolonialism in Jamaica Kincaid’s *My Garden (Book)*,” *Journal of Commonwealth and Postcolonial Studies* 14 (2006): 101–119; and Jill Didur, “‘Garden-worthy’: Rerouting Colonial Botany in Jamaica Kincaid’s *Among Flowers: A Walk in the Himalaya*,” *Public* 41 (2010): 172–185.
56. *Ibid.*, 143.
57. *Ibid.*, 137.
58. Walter Benjamin, “Theses On the Philosophy of History,” in *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zohn (New York, 1969), 256.
59. Keith Morris Washington in video interview with *Basic Black*, YouTube.com, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rtGQt1woe-Y>.
60. See, for example, Richard Mabey, “Ghost Habitats,” in *A Brush With Nature* (London: BBC Books, 2010), 208–210.
61. The double consciousness of African-American pastoral surfaces repeatedly in Camille Dungy’s superb, pathbreaking anthology, *Black Nature: Four Centuries of African American Nature* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2009).
62. Ursula Heise, “Ecocriticism and the Transnational Turn in American Studies,” *American Literary History* 20, no. 1–2 (2008): 383–84. A crucial moment in the rise of environmental literary studies in the United States was the founding in 1992 of the Association for the Study of Literature and the Environment (ASLE).

63. Peter Sauer, "Reinhabiting Environmentalism: Picking Up Where Leopold and Carson Left Off," in *The Future of Nature: Writings on a Human Ecology from Orion Magazine*, ed. Barry Lopez (Minneapolis: Milkweed, 2007), 8.
64. Peter Sauer, "Global Ethics: An American Perspective," *Orion* (Winter 2002): 3.
65. Sauer, "Global Ethics," 5.
66. It was the African-American civil rights leader, Dr. Benjamin Chavis, who coined the term "environmental racism." But he did so in 1981, long after the civil rights movement had crested.
67. Two critical texts that boosted the academic credibility of the environmental justice concerns of American minorities were Benjamin Chavis, *Toxic Wastes and Race in the United States of America* (Washington D.C.: Commission for Racial Justice, 1987) and Robert D. Bullard, *Dumping in Dixie: Race, Class, and Environmental Quality* (1990; rpt. Boulder: Westview Press, 2000). However, the influence of these texts in American universities was centered in the social sciences and had at best a very limited impact on the conceptual or imaginative priorities of environmental literary studies in the United States.
68. Said himself was leery of the term "postcolonial." However, the rise of anti-imperial and postcolonial literary studies were both largely catalyzed by *Orientalism* and, in any event, were often intimately entangled.
69. Said described environmentalism, for instance, as "the indulgence of spoiled tree huggers who lack a proper cause" (personal communiqué with author, June 7, 1994).
70. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Attention: Postcolonialism!" *Journal of Caribbean Studies* 12 (1997/98): 166. Guha's work on ecological change and peasant resistance in the Himalaya and Vandana Shiva's work on gender, environmental violence, and biodiversity are just two instances of the turn toward deepening our historical understanding of the links between ecological, colonial, and postcolonial concerns.
71. Ramachandra Guha, "Radical American Environmentalism and Wilderness Preservation: A Third World Critique," reprinted in *The Great New Wilderness Debate*, ed. J. Baird Callicott and Michael P. Nelson (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1998), 231–245.
72. Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind*, 3rd ed. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1982). Quoted in Guha, "Radical American Environmentalism," 239–240.
73. The South African refugee writer Bessie Head is a classic example of this historical turn. Head was a self-declared antifeminist who in the 1970s saw no resonance in Western feminism for the kinds of issues faced by the village women whom she lived with in Botswana. Yet Head's fictional explorations of gender dynamics and women's communal resistance have since turned her into a

- widely taught writer in women's studies courses. On Head's politics, see Rob Nixon, *Homelands, Harlem and Hollywood* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 176–192.
74. Beinart and Coates, *Environment and History*, 3. This book offers a fine comparative history of national parks in the United States and South Africa.
75. See Joe Kane, *Savages* (New York: Knopf, 1995); Suzana Sawyer, "The Politics of Petroleum: Indigenous Contestation of Multinational Oil Development in the Ecuadorian Amazon" (MacArthur Consortium Occasional Papers Series, MacArthur Program, University of Minnesota, 1997); and Melina Selverston, "The 1990 Indigenous Uprising in Ecuador: Politicized Ethnicity as Social Movement" (Papers on Latin America, no. 32, Columbia University Institute of Latin American and Iberian Studies, New York, 1993).
76. See "Kenya Students Confront Moi in Battle of the Forest," *Independent on Sunday*, February 7, 1999, 18.
77. *Ibid.*
78. Lorraine Anderson, Scott Slovic, and John P. O'Grady, eds., *Literature and the Environment: A Reader on Nature and Culture* (New York: Longman, 1999). Of the 104 essays and poems included by Anderson et al., 26 are by African-American, American Indian, Latina/o, or Asian-American writers. This marks a significant advance over the more typical spectrum of Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm's influential *Ecocriticism Reader*, which found room for only two minority essays out of twenty-six.
79. Lawrence Buell, *Writing for an Endangered World: Literature, Culture, and Environment in the U.S. and Beyond* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001).
80. Buell, *Writing for an Endangered World*, 24.
81. The broader scheme of the second book also encourages Buell to discuss some urban European writers, notably Dickens, Woolf, and Joyce.
82. Mahasweta Devi, "Pterodactyl, Puran Sahay, and Pirtha," in *Imaginary Maps*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (New York: Routledge, 1995), 95–96.
83. Buell, *Writing for an Endangered World*, 230.
84. Drawing on Gayatri Spivak's interview with Devi, Buell alludes briefly to Devi's overarching concern for the plight of first peoples globally, including Native Americans. However, he doesn't explore the implications of this for an American-centered environmentalism (*ibid.*, 230).
85. See Saro-Wiwa, *A Month and a Day*, 88.
86. Ogoniland belongs to the tropical belt that runs through the Amazon, West and Central Africa, Indonesia, and Papua and New Guinea, a zone that possesses the world's most diverse, ethnically fractured populations (400 ethnicities in Nigeria, several thousand in New Guinea) as well as unusually rich natural resources (oil, precious minerals, and timber). It is in this strip that American, European, Japanese, and Chinese extraction industry multinationals,

- frequently supported by authoritarian regimes, operate with maximum violence and impunity.
87. Pedagogically, an excellent place to start would be to read Saro-Wiwa's prison diary, *A Month and a Day*, alongside both Wole Soyinka's prefigurative early play *The Swamp Dwellers* and recent work by Nigerian environmental philosopher Kaoawole Owolabi. For a resonant comparison one could turn to Joe Kane's account in *Savages* of another contest between an equatorial micro-minority (Ecuador's Huaorani Indians) and a petroleum multinational (Texaco).
 88. For an excellent theoretical account of the conceptual limitations that result from a center-periphery model, see Timothy Mitchell, "The Stage of Modernity," in Timothy Mitchell, ed., *Questions of Modernity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 1–34. Mitchell's critique focuses on Western-centered genealogies of modernity; however, many of his insights can be applied adaptively to ecocriticism.
 89. Rob Nixon, "Postcolonialism and Environmentalism," in *Postcolonialism and Beyond*, ed. Ania Loomba et al. (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), 233–251; Susie O'Brien, "Articulating a World of Difference: Ecocriticism, Postcolonialism and Globalization," *Canadian Literature* 170/171 (2001): 140–158; Graham Huggan, "Greening Postcolonialism: Ecocritical Perspectives," *Modern Fiction Studies* 50 (2004): 701–733.
 90. http://www.poetryconnection.net/poets/Derek_Walcott/7728
 91. New Zealand, Indian, South African, Australian, Californian, and Hawaiian scholars have been at the forefront of this new oceanic scholarship.
 92. See especially Elizabeth DeLoughrey, "Pacific Heliotropes: Ecology and the Wars of Light," in *Postcolonial Ecologies*, ed. Elizabeth DeLoughrey and George Handley (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010); and Jennifer Wenzel, "Petro-magic-realism: Toward a Political Ecology of Nigerian Literature," *Postcolonial Studies* 9 (2006): 449–464.
 93. Prominent ecocritical work that engages the Caribbean includes Casteel, *Second Arrivals*; Elizabeth DeLoughrey, *Roots and Routes: Navigating Caribbean and Pacific Island Literatures* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2007); Elizabeth DeLoughrey, Renee Gosson, and George Handley, eds., *Caribbean Literature and the Environment* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2005); George Handley, *New World Poetics: Nature and the Adamic Imagination in Whitman, Neruda, and Walcott* (Athens: University Of Georgia Press, 2007); and Lizabeth Paravisini-Gebert's work in progress, *Endangered Species: Ecology and the Discourses of the Caribbean Nation*.
 94. Byron Caminero-Santangelo and Garth Myers, eds., *Environment at the Margins* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2011); DeLoughrey and Handley, eds., *Postcolonial Ecologies*; Alex Hunt and Bonnie Roos, eds., *Postcolonial Green* (Charlottesville:

- University of Virginia Press, 2010). Also directly pertinent in its transnational ambitions is Stephanie Lemenger and Teresa Shewry, eds., *Environmental Criticism for the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Routledge, 2011).
95. Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin, *Postcolonial Ecocriticism: Literature, Animals, Environment* (London: Routledge, 2010); Upamanyu Pablo Mukherjee, *Postcolonial Environments: Nature, Culture and the Contemporary Indian Novel* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); and Laura Wright, *Wilderness into Civilized Shapes. Reading the Postcolonial Environment* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2010). Although Murphy doesn't address postcolonial studies directly, there is also much of pertinence to transnational environmentalism in Patrick D. Murphy, *Ecocritical Explorations in Literary and Cultural Studies* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2009).
96. The contemporary transnational turn in American studies is too vast to address here comprehensively. Key texts include Russ Castronovo and Susan Gillman, eds., *States of Emergency: The Object of American Studies* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009); Wai Chee Dimock, *Through Other Continents: American Literature Across Deep Time* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006); Wai Chee Dimock and Lawrence Buell, eds., *Shades of the Planet: American Literature as World Literature* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007); Inderpal Grewal et al., ed., *Transnational America* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005); Heise, "Ecocriticism and the Transnational Turn in American Studies"; J. Michael Dash, *The Other America: Caribbean Literature in a New World Context* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1998); Donald E. Pease and Robyn Wiegman, eds., *The Futures of American Studies* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002); John Carlos Rowe, ed., *Post-Nationalist American Studies* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000); and Janice Radway, "What's in a Name? Presidential Address to the American Studies Association, 20 November 1998," *American Quarterly* 51, no. 1 (1999): 1–32.
97. Dungy, *Black Nature*. Another exemplary recent anthology is Laird Christensen, Mark C. Long, and Fred Waage, eds., *Teaching North American Environmental Literature*, (Washington DC: Modern Language Association of America, 2008) which contains a powerful, diverse set of engagements with environmental justice literatures and methodologies from a variety of transnational perspectives.
98. The increasingly prolific engagements between native and postcolonial studies include: Sean Kicummah Teuton, *Red Land, Red Power: Grounding Knowledge in the American Indian Novel* (Durham, NC: Duke UP, 2008); Janice Acoote et al, *Reasoning Together: The Native Critics Collective* (Tulsa, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008); Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (London: Zed, 1999); Eric Cheyfitz, "The (Post)Colonial Predicament of Native American Studies," *Interventions* 4 (2002): 405-427;

Karen M. Morin, "Postcolonialism and Native American Geographies," *Cultural Geographies* 9 (2002): 158–180; James Mackay, "Review Essay: Native American Literary Theory," *Journal of American Studies*, 41(2007): 675–680; Ann Laura Stoler, "Tense and Tender Ties: The Politics of Comparison in North American History and (Post) Colonial Studies," *The Journal of American History* (88) 2001: 1-41; and Arnold Krupat, "Postcolonialism, Ideology, and Native American Literature," in Amritjit Singh and Peter Schmidt, eds., *Postcolonial Theory and the United States: Race, Ethnicity, and Literature* (Oxford, Mississippi: University Press of Mississippi, 2000), 73-94.

Epilogue

1. Plato, *Timaeus*, trans. R. G. Bury (New York: Loeb Classical Library, 1929), 24e.
2. For a sober assessment of the scale of climate flight—underway and projected—see the report by the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR), <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49e4a5096.html>.
3. Naomi Klein, "Climate Rage," *Rolling Stone*, November 11, 2009, 18.
4. John Vidal, "Don't Consign us to History, Plead Island States at Cancun," *Guardian*, December 1, 2010, 9.
5. Toni Johnson, "Thawing Arctic's Resource Race," Council on Foreign Relations, http://www.cfr.org/publication/13978/thawing_arctics_resource_race.html.
6. Denmark's claim was mounted through its colonial relationship to Greenland, which has since gained independence.
7. Alok Jha, "New Survey of Africa Mineral Riches," *Guardian*, May 29, 2009.
8. <http://thinkprogress.org/2010/04/30/bp-greenwashing-drill/>
9. Other prominent members of the Global Climate Coalition included: DaimlerChrysler, Exxon/Esso, Ford Motor Company, General Motors Company, Shell Oil USA, Texaco, and the American Highway Users Alliance.
10. Barack Obama, "Remarks by the President in a Discussion on Jobs and the Economy in Charlotte, North Carolina" (Celgard, LLC, Charlotte, North Carolina, April 2, 2010) <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-a-discussion-jobs-and-economy-charlotte-north-carolina>.
11. Quoted in Naomi Klein, "Gulf Oil Spill," June 19, 2010, 15.
12. "Michael Klare: Grappling With the Age of 'Tough Oil,'" NPR, June 30, 2010, <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=128212150>. See also, Elizabeth Kolbert, "Oil Shocks," *New Yorker*, May 31, 2010, 13.
13. John McQuaid, "The Gulf of Mexico Oil Spill: An Accident Waiting to Happen," *Environment* 360, May 10, 2010, <http://e360.yale.edu/content/feature.msp?id=2272>.
14. *Ibid.*

15. Matt DeLong, “Joe Barton’s BP ‘Shakedown’ Comments Are Nothing New,” *Washington Post*, June 17, 2010, <http://voices.washingtonpost.com/44/2010/06/joe-bartons-bp-shakedown-comme.html>.
16. Ixtoc was a 150-foot-deep well, a fraction of the depth at which deepwater drilling routinely occurs today. But for the late 1970s that constituted innovative deepwater drilling, with all the technological challenges that entailed.
17. Quoted in William J. Broad, “Taking Lessons From What Went Wrong,” *New York Times*, July 20, 2010, D1. On this score, see also Henry Petroski, *Success Through Failure: The Paradox of Design* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006).
18. Naomi Klein, *The Shock Doctrine: Disaster Capitalism* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2007).
19. Anne McClintock, “Slow Violence and the BP Coverups,” *Counterpunch*, August 23/24, 2010, <http://www.counterpunch.org/mcclintock08232010.html>.
20. *Ibid.*
21. Adam Nossiter, “Far From Gulf, a Spill Scourge Five Decades Old,” *New York Times*, June 16, 2010, A1.
22. Ulrich Beck, *World Risk Society* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), 5; Fernando Coronil, *The Magical State: Nature, Money, and Modernity in Venezuela* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 11.
23. In 1981, three years before the disaster struck, a Bhopal-based reporter, Raajkumar Keswani, predicted that the Union Carbide factory was a disaster waiting to happen.
24. In June 2010, twenty-six years after the Bhopal Disaster, an Indian court finally convicted of negligence seven former executives of Union Carbide’s Indian subsidiary. The men received two-year jail sentences and were fined the equivalent of \$2,100 each. No Americans were prosecuted. Lydia Polgreen and Hari Kumar, “Indian Court Convicts Seven in Bhopal Disaster,” *New York Times*, June 7, 2010, 9.
25. *Ibid.*
26. Christopher F. Chabris, “You Have Too Much Mail,” *Wall Street Journal*, December 15, 2008, 7.
27. The hacked emails of climate scientists at the University of East Anglia were seized on by the right as evidence that climate change was a conspiratorial hoax. However, in the immediate aftermath of climategate, five independent investigations concluded that the science remained entirely sound. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/07/12/climategate-debunking-get_n_642980.html
28. In the Trafigura case, the claimants’ out of court settlement (for 30 million pound sterling plus costs) following the WikiLeaks revelations was particularly significant for two reasons. First, the case successfully combined rich-nation

- digital civil disobedience with more traditional grass roots activism mounted by the afflicted poor. Second, the settlement broke a double silence: the silencing of slow violence and the silencing of the British media who, in an extraordinary measure, had been hit with a “super-injunction” that barred them from covering the parliamentary debate over the suppressed scientific Minton report warning of the toxic implications of the Trafigura contamination. The settlement was a classic instance of new media strategy, old media credibility, scientific testimony, legal resources, and grassroots activism among the poor combining to counter an assault on both the environmental and the information commons. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/oct/16/carter-ruck-abandon-minton-injunction>
29. <http://another-green-world.blogspot.com/2008/08/lucha-indigena-defeat-alan-garcias.html>
 30. For two detailed accounts of the limits—in scale and efficacy—of the so-called Twitter revolution, see Annabelle Sreberny and Gholam Khiabany, *Blogistan: The Internet and Politics in Iran* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2010) and Evgeny Morozov, *The Net Delusion: The Dark Side of Internet Freedom* (London: Allen Lane, 2010). James Harkin has rightly charged the technophile Andrew Sullivan with strategic naivete and “irrational exuberance” for proclaiming that Twitter was “the critical tool for organizing the resistance in Iran” and that “the Revolution will be twittered.” Harkin, “Cyber-Con,” *London Review of Books*, December 2, 2010, 20.
 31. Malcolm Gladwell has famously accused wiki-activism of being hampered by low-risk “weak ties” and “horizontal associations,” in contrast to the civil rights movement, which transformed American society through high-risk, deeply committed, and vertically organized activism. Gladwell criticizes “the digerati” for “refusing to accept the fact there is a class of social problems for which there is no technological solution.” But, one might ask, do we always know in advance what class of social problems those are? While Gladwell’s dismissal of the unalloyed technophilia embodied by Clay Shirky and Andrew Sullivan is spot on, my own position is somewhat less skeptical than his. I believe that some fusion between old-style, high-risk, vertically organized strategies and wiki-activism can generate significant social change, even though such successful fusions, over the long term, can be challenging to sustain. See Gladwell, “Small Change,” http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2010/10/04/101004fa_fact_gladwell
 32. Jean-Paul Sartre, *What is Literature?*; trans. Bernard Frechtman (1948; rpt. London: Methuen, 1970), 37.
 33. For a lively, imaginative website that seeks to integrate activism pertaining to the environmental and the information commons, see <http://www.onthecommons.org/>
 34. Nadine Gordimer, “The Essential Gesture” (1985). In Gordimer, *Telling Times: Writing and Living, 1954-2008* (New York: Norton, 2008), 422.