What troubles one most about the concept of globalization is the suggestion of a process without end: the eternal sunshine of the present continuous tense. It seems to imply both something transcendent (like the World Spirit) and something unstoppable (like a runaway train). This combination of the mystical and the empirical should make us skeptical regardless of whether we are historians or only anthropologists. Historians do not work with an idea of an ineffable flow of time without end unless they are at the service of varieties of religious fundamentalism that believe in eternity. In the current historical juncture, where we are seeing the pervasiveness of ideologies that seek to address the contingencies of the present by recourse to eternal laws and conditions (the superiority of X race or idea), it is necessary to think with both time and context. This is not to suggest that we should fall back upon an unreconstructed historicism with its unmitigated belief in origins, genealogy, and teleology. If we are to contend with the idea of globalization in its manifestation as present continuous and engage critically as we did with an earlier avatar of it—that is, modernization—we need an analytical understanding that engages the ideas of past, present, and future with due attention to the integrity of each. An anthropological focus on context and local texture needs to be supplemented by a method that moves beyond hermetic life worlds and takes seriously contingent connections. We need to work with the understanding that the world is not a continuous space and that what we know as history is the emergence and disappearance of connections across time and space. A striking example of historical contingency would be the Chinese eunuch admiral Zheng He's voyages between 1405 and 1433 from Southeast Asia to East Africa, after which the Chinese as a nation never went to sea again. Or, more recently, the Soviet Union's creation of a space of affinity, from Dagestan to Delhi and from Ljubljana to Lagos, till the center did not happen. Something seemed forever till it was no more (Yurchak 2005). The present continuous tense represents the myopia of humanity.

It could be argued that globalization can be understood in the present perfect tense. It describes something that happened in the past, but perhaps the exact time it happened is not important. What is important is the relationship with the present. Such an idea would be anathema to a conventional historian, since the profession lays much emphasis on origins and causality. Again, the idea of a completion—or, as journalistic wisdom has it, the achievement of a flat earth—carries with it a degree of triumphalism. It is an idea of a world without contingency or indeed without “friction” (Tsing 2011). Living as we do in the age of borders and camps, with the world divided into narrow fragments, it is clear that the very idea of globalization lives now amid the backlash against it. The Polish plumber in Britain became the metaphor for Britain’s exit into an autarkic realm of nostalgia for empire and the presumed comforts of a class order. And, of course, the Muslim at the gates of Europe has led to a fiercely ingrown imagination that has sparked the growth of chauvinist political parties. Globalization had happened. Or at least the understanding that it had happened led to the fierce digging in of heels against the possibility of a future continuous tense. Even as there are calls for a new philosophy for Europe (Esposito 2018), such intellection is located in a sense of immediacy, a misrecognition of a history that had already violently involved Europe in the lives of distant others. What we see now is the return swing of the boomerang of history, in Césaire’s words, implicating past, present, and future. The call to history comes from this need to address amnesia, an anxiety born out of a present and imminent sense of danger and less from a solipsistic desire for vindication, or of déjà vu. In contrast to our insistence on contingency in response to the present continuous (“everything was forever till it was no more”), one can say here that “nothing is over until it is really over.” The earth is not as flat as a naive account may make it.

Finally, there is the no-nonsense, practical approach that does away with any notion of tense. The world has always been thus, always already connected. If one thinks about the process of populating the world once the first anatomically modern humans started their peregrinations out of Africa about forty thousand years ago, then the time span of one’s argument achieves new dimensions. It raises the fundamental question of how far back we have to go in order to write a history of the present. There were two routes out of Africa. A northern route would have taken our ancestors from eastern sub-Saharan Africa across the Sahara desert, then through Sinai and into the Levant. An alternative southern route may have charted a path from Djibouti or Eritrea across the Bab el-Mandeb strait and into Yemen around the Arabian Peninsula. The Bab el-Mandeb, one of the world’s busiest shipping channels, would have been a narrow channel about fifteen thousand years ago (https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/efched_nerc_2006/project_list.cfm). The southern migration ran across from northern Africa through to Southeast Asia and Australia and by the Pacific coastal route to South America. The implications of this early globalization are profound for our understanding of both the idea of a common stock of humanity and a genetic dispersion that does
not allow for any bounded and unmiscegenated idea of racial identity. In fact, this account may even upset the traditional historical accounts of the origins of civilization, focused as they are on rivers, land, agriculture, and states. It has been suggested that perhaps the movements of humans across the vast expanses of the oceans, hugging the coastline, may have been the way that civilizations originated and spread: from the littoral inward (Rozwadowski 2019). To cautious academics following Voltaire’s suggestion of cultivating one’s own garden, or indeed discipline, all of this might seem a trifle enthusiastic. We might prefer more recent themes: for example, the age of ocean voyages by Europeans, or colonialism, or capitalism. Then one could locate the idea of globalization within bite-size portions of time, rather than adopt a gourmand’s appetite for time and space. However, in either case there are historical arguments to be made that are less the product of anxiety and more about precisely defining the extent of one’s garden against that of others.

ART AT THE END OF THE WORLD

The most immediate sense of globalization that we have is that of global warming and the rise of the ocean levels due to the melting of the polar ice caps. Regardless of where one is located on the globe, the rising waters press on our consciousness, and we are becoming more aware that the Biblical prophecy of the fire next time may be a red herring. This sense of an interconnected history brings together for the first time the intertwined fates of humans, animals, and other beings on the planet, sentient or otherwise. Whether we locate this history in the distant historical past with the origins of agriculture and the destruction of the environment with war, clearing of forests, and the origins of states, or the more proximate and accelerated destruction arising from industrialization, history attends on our reflections (Steffen et al. 2011). The idea of the Anthropocene has shifted us away from the benign temporality of the Holocene (from the Greek holos, “whole”) reminding us precisely of the lack of wholeness of the epoch that we occupy. However, there is a considerable continuity of the narcissism that puts the human at the center of the universe, whether as the rightful owner/depredator of the world (as in the book of Genesis) or as the agent who has wreaked destruction. It reminds one of Benjamin’s reading of Paul Klee's painting of the Angel of History, being blown backward into the future, surveying the ceaseless piling up of the debris of history in his wake (Benjamin [1940] 2003). We may be returning to more theological ideas of the Great Chain of Being or indeed the idea of the equal culpability of all creatures for their actions, as with the early modern church and its understanding of the actions of insects and animals on the environment and the actions of humans as equally moral or otherwise (Ferry 1995). The renewed interest in human-animal interaction arises as much from an understanding of the hubris of an anthropocentric view as from the fact of a common fate. That the ongoing degrada
tion of life and the environment has a history of human occlusion of the nonhuman in history has made historical rethinking necessary about processes described hitherto in the abstract jargon of successive ages of progress. Decen
tering the human becomes possible only as a result of catastrophic thinking, the imagining of what comes after the apocalypse. As Samuel Johnson observed, “When a man knows he is to be hanged . . . it concentrates his mind wonder
dully.”

The art biennale in the southern Indian coastal city of Kochi summons up the many histories of humans and non-

humans and their interactions with nature. Kochi itself emerged as a port in 1342 CE when a flood in the Periyar River slilt up the historic port of Kodungallor (Cranganore, or Muziris in the Roman records). Its coming into existence was a result of the human impact on the environment as much as the inexorable rhythms of water and the monsoons. The founding myth of the state of Kerala—indeed, of many regions along the western coast of India—has the legendary figure Parasuram reclaiming land from the ocean by throwing the axe with which he had slain twenty-one generations of warriors into the waters. The ocean recoils in horror at being asked to accept this bloody offering, opening up a narrow strip of land for inhabitation. The idea that what belonged to the ocean is a gift easily recalled is reflected in historical events like the flooding of the Periyar as much as the clear and present possibility of the city of Mumbai being swallowed by rising ocean waters by 2050. Not an alarmist scenario if one considers that the city of Jakarta, the capital of Indonesia, is no longer habitable because it is sinking at the rate of ten inches a year. In this case, however, it is a direct result of human action—both domestic and industrial consumption—in draining the aquifers. The South African artist Gideon Mendel, in his wonderful photographic series Drowning World (2007–), has portraits of people who return to their drowned homes and pose neck deep in water. What is significant is that these portraits come from flood zones around the world, from Haiti to Pakistan, Australia, and Germany. Climate change has resulted in a globalization that has dissolved the conventional distinctions between the first world and the third world and between developed and developing countries. Mendel follows up with the series Flood Lines (2014) and Water Marks (2015), which looks at the marks left on interiors and surfaces in the home as well as on that domes
tic record of a history: personal photographs. This is the record of connections between humans across the globe in a history of actions that originate in multiple noncontiguous venues.

It is alarming when floodwaters enter homes, raising visions of the universal deluge, but what about that which is happening on the periphery of our visions and understand
ing? The Swiss artist Marie Velardi (2007) raises this issue in her installation Atlas des Isles Perdues 2107 (Atlas of Lost Islands 2107) at the Kochi Biennale. In a room where the walls are painted a cerulean blue hang a series of framed sketches—contour maps of islands across the globe—span
ing the oceans. On a table in the center is a forty-seven-volume with the title mentioned above. What viewers realize as they walk through the room is that some of these islands from the Pacific, Atlantic, and Indian Oceans—some familiar, some not; some inhabited, some not—have already disappeared under the waters, others will disappear soon, but by 2107 all of them will be submerged: so many Ant
lantises. It is a visual conflation of tenses, past, present, and future: an entire history of the earth in one fell swoop. This is a history that moves beyond the limited imaginings of modernity, the colonial and postcolonial eras, and so on and addresses the time of the present through an ongoing past and an imminent future. As with Mendel, the questions of territory and time are both complicated as we move be
ding the idea of nations and regions and think genuinely with the globe through a conjuncture. It is a conjuncture that raises the question again of how far back or how wide we have to go to write a history of the present. This concate
nation of geographies is occasioned less by human agency and more by myriad actions over time by nonconnected ac
tors in noncontiguous spaces which will have an impact on

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these spaces. The idea of a globalized common fate is common to both Mendel and Velardi, but the latter gives us a sense of finality that is on the horizon—a tense present continuous.

In her video installation Contingent (2008), the Brazilian artist Rivane Neuenschwander traces a map of the world in honey and lets loose an army of ants on it. As the ants consume the honey, the continents shift shape and slowly disappear. This disappearance of "the world" by virtue of the disorganized, frenetic feeding of the ants is captured via time-lapse video over ten minutes and thirty seconds. At one level, the video is about greed and the desire to consume without limits, which leads eventually to the loss of that which one desires. An exhausting desire that leads to the exhaustion of desire. However, there is also the hubris of cartography and the connectedness of the world made through travel, discovery, and exploitation—the world written through the actions of humans. The time-lapse video also evokes the accelerated pace of globalization, which effaces boundaries and identities at the cost of the erasure of the earth. All of these artworks question the verities of the social sciences with their silo-oriented work of disciplines, spaces, and time. They take us beyond the idea of disciplinary crises or, indeed, the solipsistic anxieties of academics and ask us to consider the histories that led to the present, providing a "fuller narrative . . . a more total account," as Appadurai asks of us. One's battle may not be with the idea of history; rather, it should be with myopic anthropocentric accounts of history that dwell still with an idea of the national rather than the global. That we are in the space of a "contingency without an identifiable archive," as Appadurai puts it, means that it is the creative artist in the crucible of their imagination who is forging the weapons for contending against human amnesia and hubris. However, knowing that "globalization has a longue durée" provides us with less comfort than Appadurai assumes. The work of history provides no consolation, no space for nostalgia, to go back to the image of the Angel of History. When these artists invoke a long history that stretches both backward and forward but collides with the present, they speak of the jetzezeit—now time—that Benjamin invoked. The proper work of history, outside the conventions and pieties of the discipline, is this jetzezeit when one reaches back to the past in a time of urgency to see the exigencies of the present clearly.

WALKING ON WATER

The history of human civilization has been the struggle between trying to put people in their place and the resistance to such rooting. States have tried to set down, classify, and imprison people within boundaries, labor regimes, and social arrangements. Each of these processes has generated dissenters who resist this civilizational aspiration of elites by rebelling or by voting with their feet. The invention of the nation has been the most recent and the most successful attempt to bind people together through coercion as much as the ideology of belonging. The citizen is pitted against the stranger, the migrant, the refugee, and the person out of place. In fact, this is the flip side of globalization, which creates more and more placeless people on the move from geographies devastated by the wars between nations. If war is the global symptom of our times (Grove 2019), so is the restless movement of people laughing to scorn physical barriers, documentary regimes, and the sustained brutalities of military power. This dialectic of national belonging pitted against the unwelcome stranger is the motor for globalization. Sri Lankans in Capri, Sikhs in Toronto, Syrians in Berlin, Rohingyas in Oman, Bangladeshis in Venice: this is a concatenation of geographies, histories, and identities that fuels the political economy of capital, the racial economy of nations, and the fluid economies of labor simultaneously. The scale here is both global and local at the same time. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that it confounds these binaries, and we are forced to think about the space of uncanny and proliferating continuities. Migration produces its own scales and territories and a cross-hatching of spaces. The very idea of people out of place—which was the bedrock of considerations about nations, citizens, and refugees—is in a crisis. Not least because the very idea of citizenship itself has been rendered parlous in the age of new regimes committed to generating a paradigm of precarity for consolidation of authoritarian power.

The entities that come to mind when one looks at the new globalization of movement are that of the Syrians—some physically fit, others disabled and in wheelchairs—crossing the Mediterranean Sea in numbers in their flight to Europe. Amid the heartrending images of those who did not make it are the many who, in a contemporary miracle, walked on water to safety. The oceans, with their tumultuous waves and their recalcitrance, seemed to have held no terrors for these modern-day Jesuses. Indeed, one can draw an alternative genealogy of those who have taken to the ocean in search of better lives, from Cambodians to Sri Lankans to Burmese to the Rohingyas, to set alongside our conventional accounts of sea voyages that stretch from the Vikings through the Portuguese to Thor Heyerdahl. It is on the uncertain borders with the oceans—Lesbos or Lampedusa—that we are seeing the effects of globalization as those with nothing to lose exercise a temerity that transcends borders and national identities. These examples of human intransigence in the face of the pressures of history demand narratives that move beyond the coast and dip their feet in the water and retrace the steps of those distant ancestors who walked on water to cross over from Africa to populate the world. The emergences of spaces that are rents in the ambitions of nations to police their borders are an indication of a globalization that creates connections between noncontiguous spaces. There are multiple archipelagoes of affinity, and it is the movement of people that creates this archipelagic space. Amitav Ghosh, in his recent novel Gun Island (2019), creates such an archipelago of connections between the Sundarbans mangrove swamps in the Bay of Bengal and the sinking city of Venice. Bangladeshi migrants move across the waters to labor in the city: a city of fable for litterateurs and sentimental visitors, a familiar swampy site of labor for the Bangladeshi. Ghosh brings together history, unexpected connections, and the supernatural in a narrative climax that pits a xenophobic state against the "foreigners" in their midst. What Ghosh seems to be suggesting is that Venice is merely an island in an archipelago connected by the movements of labor; the city sits at the lip of a very longue durée of globalization. These conjunctural contexts are important. Some are born globalized, some achieve globalization, and some have globalization thrust on them. A matter of history, after all. Another novel, The Dragonfly Sea, by the Kenyan writer Yvonne Ochiambo Awoor (2019), looks to another archipelago of connections created by the voyages of the Chinese admiral Zheng He to the East African coast in the fifteenth century. On the island of Lamu live the Chinese African descendants of this encounter, and the novel takes up the story of one tempestuous young woman and her journey to China as a "descendant" under the aegis of the present government of China. We tend to look at globalization too often through...
the abstract forces of financial capital or the etiolated theorization of cosmopolitan intellectuals, forgetting the real, unceasing movement of people that has always laughed national borders to scorn.

The question of origins bothers us. Either we want to find a particular conjuncture, or we imagine, as stated earlier, that the question of origins is a misplaced one. This is an anxiety that cuts both ways and has a very distinct notion of time. An earlier version of anthropology believed in the idea of an encounter with the West that opened up spaces to civilization or to a violent encounter with a different world of values, depending on the politics of the writing. Globalization in the period of imperial expansion and consolidation was never about a flat earth but about a very peaky, hierarchical one. There were those who had reached fulfillment and others who had to strive upward, however Sisyphean the task, condemned never to occupy the same time as those who sought to better them. What was called the "denial of coevalness" (Fabian 1983) was also about those who could enter history and those who merely lived in it, like buffaloes in a swamp. The very idea of the globe was one ordered rationally into directions, time, and cartographic accuracy: datelines, latitudes, and longitudes. It was horizontal, reflecting the spread of the stain of empire, pink on the map, bloody on the ground. However, it was also vertical in that spaces were incorporated in a hierarchy that placed many at the bottom and some at the top. It had the nature of a sacral ordering, a new great chain of human being. Globalization was about an awakening to history and a sense of one's place (Buck-Morss 1991, 36). The metaphor of the Sleeping Beauty is a potent one: spaces waiting for the kiss of the prince to waken to a sense of purpose and action. However, there were other versions of the globe and understandings of the cosmos that sat alongside these imperial visions. Globalization, in this sense, at least, is a flow in which many visions of the world collide, and it is this collision rather than the triumph of any one version that constitutes the historical process. Writing against the idea of beginnings and endings is itself the beginning of a more textured history. A powerful work by Thongchai Winichakul (1997) takes up the question of the relation between cosmology and geography in Siam: the relation between a vertical geography that connects humans to the heavens and a horizontal geography that connects humans to other humans. If one were to move away from the teleological impetus of history that seeks the constant transition from X to Y state, one can see in this argument the presence of many globes that complicates the question of globalization. The Thais acquire another version of the globe to set alongside their local understanding, and the metaphor of awakening to a "reality" makes way for an understanding of crosshatching realities. As Ghosh shows, the world of Sundarbans and its finely balanced cosmologies of tigers and female deities seizes into other sacred and secular spaces across the ocean, into a Catholic Venice and its more secular dangers.

CONTINUOUS OCEANS

Alongside these recreations of an archipelagic imagination, we need to think seriously about water and oceans and move away from an imagination driven by terrestrial hubris. Under the terms of the Treaty of Tordesillas of 1494, Pope Alexander VI divided the world on either side of Cape Verde, the lands to the east belonging to Portugal and those to the west to Castile. A similar procedure is followed by historians who divide the indivisible ocean into segments depending on their national affiliations: Asian historians study the Pacific and Indian Oceans, and the Atlantic is the preserve of Euro-American history. Renisa Mawani's recent book Across the Oceans of Law asks how we can get "the Pacific, Atlantic, and Indian oceans into much-needed conversation," allowing us to imagine a paradigm of "oceans as method" (Mawani 2018, 6, 17). As she puts it, "the maritime voyages of Indian travelers joined the eastern and western Indian oceans to the Pacific, and in some cases, the Atlantic" (Mawani 2018, 10). Thinking the ocean through the histories of migration begins to reckon with contiguous as much as continuous oceans rather than divided continents. The ocean is a global entity within which multiple connections happen, as opposed to the continents truncated and divided by the idea of nations and borders. Globalization needs to be thought fluidly through water.

Mawani takes up the story of the SS Komagata Maru, which set sail in April 1914, with Baba Gurdit Singh in charge, from Hong Kong to Vancouver with 376 Punjabis on board, traveling eastward across the Pacific Ocean. Given the tightening restrictions on immigration and the drawing of the color line by the imperial white powers, which looked at brown migration with suspicion, the voyage was seeking to sidestep regulations. But Gurdit Singh was also summoning up another, older idea of oceans beyond the control of nations and empires. In February 1914, the native of Punjab and a putative rubber planter in Malaysia had issued a proclamation to all Indians. The Sri Guru Nanak Steamship Company, with a fleet of four ships, would eventually travel the Indian, Atlantic, and Pacific Oceans, from Bombay to Brazil and from Calcutta to Canada. Apart from the rhetorical alliteration, the idea of continuous water was central to this vision.

In the era before steamships, the first ever travelogue in an Indian language was written in Malayalam, the language of Kerala, on the southwestern coast of India. The Varthamanapusthakam (1790) details the account of a journey from Malabar to Rome via Lisbon to settle a dispute within the local Catholic community over the question of succession to a bishopric. In November 1778 Malpan Mar Joseph Cariattil and Cathanar Thomman Paremakkal set sail for Europe, anchored in Angola in February 1779, and then sailed to Bahia in Brazil, for that was the route of the ship that they traveled on. They were extremely glad to get to Bahia, "the bosom of all saints" (Podipara 1971, 485). Cariattil had spent time in Rome earlier, so he was able to communicate with the local Italian Capuchins in their language, and they settled down for a comfortable conversation in Latin on Aristotle's Metaphysics and the Summa Theologica of Aquinas. The ship then sailed to Genoa—en route they were attacked by English pirates—and that voyage took them thirty-three days. They stopped for a month in Genoa and finally reached Rome in 1780. Cariattil was clear that he "had not come to see the glories of the city of Rome" but rather to try to settle the dispute back home. In fact, there is little description of the Vatican or accounts of theological discussions. Cariattil observed laconically, "The body of the Pope was tall and stout, his face bright, his hair well-combed and their ends arranged into little curls, like rings" (Podipara 1971, 515–24). In July 1782 Joseph Cariat-til achieved what he had set out to do and was nominated the Archbishop of Cranganore.

How are we to rethink the spatial imaginary of the ocean away from the paradigm of area studies and distinct maritime spaces? Our present imaginations are equally the residue of colonialism and nationalism; the partition of the world during the Cold War, and the pedagogical structures at universities and academic production that have largely...
worked within this curtailment of the conceptualizations of space. What Lewis and Wigen have called the "architecture of continents," the idea that continents are "large, continuous, discrete masses of land, ideally separated by expanses of water" (M. W. Lewis and Wigen 1997, 21), structures our understanding. However, hidden in this assumption is another, deeper misconception: a perception that the bodies of water themselves are separated and distinct. These putative oceanic subsystems, ecological and meteorological zones, and cultural enclaves recreate the division of the world into nations and regions. This is not to deny the coherence that may exist within such zones but rather to assert that the boundaries are fluid and porous, as on land, but without the hermetic seals between nations. As used to be asked of the Roman Empire, how did one know when one had left it? This is the fluid and conjunctural question that we need to think with. Glissant asks for archipelagic thinking across noncontiguous but connected spaces—connections that are born of travel, migration, and affinities imagined through these intersecting histories. In his evocative words, "the Caribbean is . . . a sea that explodes the scattered lands into an arc. A sea that diffusates . . . the reality of archipelagos . . . a natural illustration of the thought of Relation" (Glissant 1997, 35). The sea explodes and scatters land and connects it at the same time; in fact, it becomes that which connects lands. Laleh Khalili’s work on new ports and shipping infrastructures argues that maritime transportation is central to the very fabric of global capitalism and brings together military bases, cargo ports, hydrocarbon economies, free trade zones, and the international migration of labor to serve this global network (Khalili 2020). If Glissant addresses the question of culture, imagination, and affinity, Khalili’s work not only forces us to get our feet wet but also gets us to think about the hard undergirding of the world through the oceans, where we see a network of ports rather than the classic urban centers, capital cities of the world, that we are accustomed to think with.

While the ancient Chinese character for city was the same as that for wall, when we think about port cities from Melaka to Kochi to the Arabian Peninsula and the Swahili coast, we can see these cities as doors or portals. They reflect layers of historical maritime interaction sometimes going back over millennia. These multiracial, multi-ethnic, polyglot sites, whether Zanzibar or Kochi, reflect layers of historical interaction sometimes going back over millennia. These multiracial, multi-ethnic, polyglot sites, whether Zanzibar or Kochi, reflect coexistence as much as conflict, and it is important to not make metaphors of them. Prejudices and everyday tensions get worn away as much as exacerbated in the business of living together. As Su-Lin Lewis says, port city cosmopolitanism always entailed a "double consciousness" of global processes and local pluralism, each playing off the other (S. L. Lewis 2016, 11). This longue durée engagement with the ocean could lead a twentieth-century Indian intellectual like Balakrishna Pillai to commence a history in 1930 of Kerala, on the southwest coast of India, and begin it in Babylon in order to reflect on the trade in pepper between these regions since Roman times. The pepper with which Carthage paid tribute to Rome had come from Kerala. Pillai muses, "Is Kerala a chapter in the history of Rome or is Rome a chapter in the history of Kerala?" (Menon 2010). Such a "provincialization" of Europe avant les lettres arose less from a political stance under empire and more from a sense of a present that extended backward across oceans beyond colonialism. Ports have always been spaces of liminality, sitting as they do on the edge of the ocean, open to the world, and possessing fluid geographies. Tomé Pires, the sixteenth-century Portuguese apothecary, observed in Melaka that one could hear eighty-four languages spoken, that even the parrots were multilingual. If colonialism was to bring in a "linguistic intransigence," to use Glissant’s words and the imperative of monolingualism, in the port cities a polyglot universe survived alongside larger imaginations of space and longer temporalities of reckoning history. Thinking with port towns, their miscegenated spaces, and their betwixt and between histories requires us to live (as Socrates said) not like ants and frogs around a pond, but to think about the ocean less as land’s end and more as a shaper of the history of land (Horden and Purcell 2002, 7).

A recent slew of works have worked with this premise of thinking what I would like to call the "paracolonial" to move beyond the triad of precolonial, colonial, and postcolonial that abbreviates historical time to the conjuncture of the colonial. Instead of reading backward from the myopia of nations and area studies, Engseng Ho studies the space between the Hadramawt in Yemen and Southeast Asia through the movement of religious specialists, traders, and political actors. It is a history that precedes, sits alongside, and exceeds colonial and national narratives and geographies. The initial migration of Alawi Sayyid descendants across the ocean traces a sacred geography of graves and worship that gets overlaid with the movement of kin, mercenaries, and goods. Alongside this is the creation, dispersion, and recreation of an ecumenical Islam along a wide swath catering to a creole population whose mothers were Indian, Buginese, Chinese, and so on. While the twentieth century does bring a kind of closure to an incessant movement that commenced in the twelfth century CE, the movement of people and ideas across the oceans continues, and strategic geopolitics continues to deal with the long historical traces and its spillover into other waters, as in the history of Osama bin Laden in the Atlantic Ocean. As Ho observes, "peoples native to old diasporas have geographical sensibilities as large as whole empires; possessed of folklore, ritual and literature, their cultural memories reach back even further. It is an expansive intelligence of this sort, I believe, which has now taken up arms against its geographical equal, the American empire" (Ho 2006, 2004, 241).

These geographies of affinity generated through migration, marriage, and commerce as also parallel networks of religion and religious practices exceed the affiliations with contemporary nation-states as much as colonial cartographies. Space is created by the movement and imaginations of people and material; it is not a static entity within which people move. We have to reckon with a different temporality than merely that of our etiolated sense of a time of modernity. We need to think athwart maps, with a sense of transversality, as Lionnet and Shih have suggested with their idea of "minor transnationalism" to engage with these uncanny and proliferating geographies. As they put it, "we forget to look sideways to lateral networks that are not readily apparent" (Lionnet and Shih 2005, 1). We need to move toward an "archipelagic thinking" across noncontiguous yet connected spaces and rebel against the comfort of assuming that things near each other are more related to each other, or that people think with the space created for them by the nation-states of which they are, or hope to be, citizens.

CONCLUSION

This essay has tried to engage with Appadurai’s idea that the historian’s insistence on historicizing the phenomenon of globalization arises from a disciplinary anxiety to both explain away the phenomenon ("nothing special") as well
as to absorb it within existing paradigms ("we have seen this before"). What we need to treat with a proper degree of skepticism is whether we are witnessing "spatial encompassment on unprecedented levels"—or is this just a matter of perspective? Historically and into the present, there has been a concatenation of spaces through the movement of peoples, ideas, and material, and if one resists the Hegelian temptation (of the achievement of one time, one space, and one idea, as Marxists tend to think), the world has always been an archipelagic entity with multiple intersecting visions of the globe. We certainly need to move beyond "the local, sovereign, and archival" to look at a more dispersed sense of space. Even the "local" is merely a site within which multiple visions of the world intersect. This requires us to move beyond the hubris of nationalism and states, as also the cages of regional and area studies created by a merely strategic Cold War vision, to think about the multiplicity of connections across noncontiguous spaces. Appadurai’s insistence on "a comparative study of connectivities" is salutary, but in our choice of spaces, we have to see them as fluid and dispersed. The example of Buddhism and a comparison of the emergence of violent and exclusionary religious nationalisms in Myanmar and Sri Lanka probably takes us back to the comfort of a space called South Asia. What would it mean to study the world along the oceanic fault lines of movement from Melaka to South India, Aden, and Europe, which projects Tamilian refugees to Capri and Canada? Or indeed the historical memory of the Crusades, which leads Syrians to walk across the waters to Europe? How do Lesbos and Lampedusa become the nodes of a globalization that speaks of the restless and relentless movement of humans across unconnected landscapes? This would be a truly "comparative study of connectivities" that explodes the ocean into the land, as Glissant memorably suggested. We need to start walking on water if we are to truly understand the time and space of globalization.

**AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY**

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