

How Do We Rethink the Earth?

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<https://science.nasa.gov/resource/the-blue-marble/c>

*You can't really know where you are
going
until you know where you have been.*

MAYA ANGELOU

QINGDAO · 2200 YEARS AGO

Xu Fu

The ancient voyager who wanted to know what lay beyond the horizon. Legend has him set sail eastward from Langya, in what is today Shandong — searching for the islands of the immortals. *For his generation, the ocean was the great uncrossable.*

For our generation, the question has turned inward:

how do we truly see the ocean?



徐福東渡 · Xu Fu's Eastern Voyage · c. 219 BCE

https://note.com/space_business/n/nb1f00a4733f6

A CHANGING RELATIONSHIP

*The history of human civilisation
can be read through our changing
relationship with the ocean.*

We became extraordinarily good
at crossing it.

And extraordinarily good
at using it.

After thousands of years of learning how to cross the ocean — have we actually learned how to see it?

Perhaps the next great voyage is not across the ocean. Perhaps it is a voyage in perception.

A rethinking
*of what the ocean is, what it does,
what our civilisation rests upon,
and ultimately, where we ourselves belong.*



PART ONE · RETHINK THE MAP

**NORTH
AMERICA**

EUROPE

ASIA

**ATLANTIC
OCEAN**

AFRICA

**PACIFIC
OCEAN**

**PACIFIC
OCEAN**

**SOUTH
AMERICA**

**INDIAN
OCEAN**

**ATLANTIC
OCEAN**

**AUSTRALIA
AND
OCEANIA**

SOUTHERN OCEAN

Most of us carry the same map in our heads. Continents in the centre — solid, coloured, named.
Between them the ocean: blue, vast, mostly empty. The thing that lies between the places that
matter.

Rethink
the map.

THE SPILHAUS PROJECTION

*What if we cut
the land instead?*

The projection cuts the land and lets the ocean occupy the centre. The continents move to the edges — and what has always been true suddenly appears.

There is one connected ocean.



Spilhaus projection (stereographic, ocean-centred)

ONE OCEAN

*The water is not the gap in the map.
The water is the map.*

01

Currents move heat, nutrients and life across the entire planet.

02

The same connected system links coastlines, weather and species.

03

And waste, too, travels through this one shared ocean.

Ecological relationship.

The ocean is integrated through relationships of distance, timing, temperature, food and movement — patterns that life has learned over thousands of generations.

Consider a penguin, whose body and breeding cycle have evolved around a world in which food is always within a survivable journey.



For us,

the ocean may look empty.

For the penguin,

it is an entire landscape.

Fronts, currents, temperature boundaries, layers of light and darkness, sound pathways — a richly organised world.



WHEN THE JOURNEY GROWS LONGER

*If food shifts farther away,
a parent must travel
much further.*

In a tightly balanced system, even another 100 km can matter. A familiar route can become too long for life to sustain. Evolution has written limits into the body.

What climate change disrupts is not only temperature.

It disrupts predictability.

PART THREE · THE HUMAN OCEAN

*For most of human history,
the ocean shaped us.
We have now become
powerful
enough to shape the ocean.*

*What happens when one species becomes powerful enough to alter the system
on which every species depends?*

We have begun to change the ocean itself.

01

We change the chemistry.

Carbon absorbed by the sea — warming and acidification reaching into every water column.

02

We change the physical system.

Warming, sea ice, currents, sea level. The loss of the predictability the penguin depended on.

03

We change what enters it.

Plastics, nutrients, chemicals, fishing gear — carried into the water.

*A fisher's net
can bring back
more than fish.*

*What we throw away does not disappear.
It simply becomes someone else's reality.*

THE CONNECTED SYSTEM

There is no
“away.”

Waste does not disappear when we stop seeing it. It moves from street to drain, drain to river, river to ocean — and returns in currents, coastlines, food webs and fishing nets.

*What we put into the ocean
does not stay separate from life.*

*fibres in fish,
fragments in seabirds,
plastics as substrate.*



VALUE & GRATITUDE

*If we value our lives,
we must value what sustains them.*

BODY

The breath moving through you, which the sea half-fills with oxygen.

PLANET

The living planet that holds and feeds the body taking that breath.

CIVILISATION

Every city, harbour and trade route, raised upon both.

*All resting on water.
Gratitude is an honest accounting of dependence.*

Perhaps our deepest
inherited assumption
is that humanity somehow
stands *outside* the Earth system.

*We are not standing outside
a living planet looking in.*

We are participants within it.



*The signature of Earth
in the universe
is written in blue ink.*

The Earth announces itself
against the darkness as this
extraordinary blue world.

*Ocean literacy asks for more
than knowledge about the ocean.*

*It asks for a different understanding of
where we are.*

We are ocean.

Blue Schools
Global Network



BLU 
SCHOOLS INDIA



Jane Goodall Institute
India