Racial Entanglements

Tracing the Transpacific Impacts of Pu‘uloa, ‘Iliahi, and Hawaiian Anticolonial Struggle

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Abstract. This essay addresses the need for relational transpacific approaches to race and empire across groups, species, and sites. Pacific Islander knowledge is crucial for such approaches, but Asian Americanists must avoid extracting it. We should develop distinct frameworks accountable to Native Pacific knowledge. Juxtaposing Kanaka Maoli concepts with Asian American scholarship and Ruth Ozeki's novel *A Tale for the Time Being*, I assemble a racial entanglement theory for the range of agencies in empire. I show how Hawai‘i's colonization, the militarization of Pu‘uloa, whaling, and sandalwood extraction impacted iconic Asian American history, making Hawaiian struggles central to Asian American studies.

The 1941 bombing of Pearl Harbor is an iconic moment in Asian American history, due to the United States' subsequent declaration of war on Japan and incarceration of Japanese Americans. The bombing also figures as a turning point in transpacific studies. World War II is vital to the field's examinations of Japanese and US empires and shifting imperial power in the region.[1] As central as Pearl Harbor is to these historical narratives, they have paid far less attention to Kānaka Maoli, on whose waters this base was built, or to the histories of this place before it was a base. Jon Kamakawiwo‘ole Osorio reminds us that its original name is Pu‘uloa.[2] Before US militarization, it was a vibrant bay where oysters thrived and Kānaka harvested the rich seafood.[3]

How did Puʻuloa, a peaceful estuary abundant with life, become the site of war and death we know as Pearl Harbor? Tracing this story will illustrate two themes of this essay: the range of agencies implicated in imperialism in the Pacific and the centrality of Hawaiian struggles to Asian American and transpacific histories. Kyle Kajihiro has done crucial work historicizing Pearl Harbor. He notes that the earliest Western descriptions of Puʻuloa came from "explorers, whalers, and traders" in the late 1700s, including British trader Nathaniel Portlock, British captain George Vancouver, and US captain John Kendrick. Kajihiro identifies an 1841 survey by the United States Exploring Expedition (also called the Wilkes Expedition after its leader, Lieutenant Charles Wilkes) as a "milestone in the production of 'Pearl Harbor' as an object of geopolitical desire."[4] While Kajihiro doesn't dwell on early European trade, I build on his work by suggesting that the trade in whales, furs, and ʻiliahi (sandalwood) before the 1840s was a key starting point for the path to Pearl Harbor. Indeed, Portlock was a trader stopping in Hawaiʻi on a voyage to collect furs in British Columbia to sell in China.[5] And Kendrick was among the first Westerners to recognize the valuable sandalwood in Hawaiʻi.[6] Of the first three Westerners describing Puʻuloa, only Vancouver was not directly involved in trade; he stopped in Hawaiʻi on an expedition to chart the northwest coast of North America.

The whale and sandalwood industries shaped another first, the US navy's contact with Hawaiʻi. In 1826, the USS *Dolphin* and USS *Peacock* landed in Honolulu.[7] The navy was called to Hawaiʻi as the trade in ʻiliahi and whales was booming. The sandalwood trade had indebted the kingdom. US traders were demanding their money, but poʻe aliʻi (Hawaiian chiefs) strategically deferred payments. The traders called on congress for help in collecting.[8] Meanwhile, Hawaiʻi had become the central port for US whaling in the Pacific.[9] US whaling interests called on the US navy to control the unruly sailors spilling off whaling ships. On arrival, the *Dolphin* and *Peacock* were pulled into the sandalwood debt dispute, backing the traders' demands with force.[10] Under gunpoint, the aliʻi agreed to a tax on makaʻāinana (commoners) payable in sandalwood.[11] The US navy afterward became a routine presence in Hawaiʻi as the whaling industry continued to expand and the chiefs continued to defer paying their debt collectors.[12]

Honolulu's harbor had been developed into a naval yard during King Kamehameha's reign, but with so much traffic in Hawaiʻi, the harbor became too cramped for the United States' imperial ambitions.[13] In 1841, the Wilkes Expedition saw instead the potential of Puʻuloa eight miles away. The commercial boom was the backdrop for this pivotal survey. The expedition's surveys of Antarctica, numerous Pacific islands, and the West Coast of North America were motivated by scientific interests but also by a need for better maps for US whalers and China traders, maps that would allow the young nation to expand

its economic power.[14] Wilkes reported Puʻuloa's potential to "afford the best and most capacious harbour in the Pacific."[15] The only barriers to realizing its potential were Hawaiian sovereignty and a coral reef blocking large ships. The United States plowed through these barriers by annexing Hawaiʻi in 1898 and dredging a 600-foot-wide channel through the living reef.[16] In the Kumulipo, the moʻokūʻauhau (genealogy) that traces the descent of Kānaka Maoli, coral are among the eldest ancestors of Kānaka.[17]

The violence of taking Puʻuloa was not just political and military; it was ecological and cultural. The channel opened a path for militarizing Hawaiʻi. To build the naval base, the United States seized land, displaced Kānaka from fisheries that had provided for central Oʻahu, reshaped the shoreline, and extracted tons of stone from across the islands.[18] Puʻuloa became Pearl Harbor, the largest naval base in the Pacific and the "launch pad" for the United States' "imperial thrust into Asia."[19] As the United States' Pacific empire grew with the colonization of the Philippines and Guam after 1898, Pearl Harbor was described as "so related to our Western coast, to the Philippine Islands and to the western terminus of the Panama Canal that it is the most commanding and strategic point for the control of interests of the United States in that part of the world."[20] With military infrastructure in Hawaiʻi came military personnel, who tripled in numbers between World War I and World War II.[21] As Haunani-Kay Trask notes, Hawaiʻi became "the most militarized of America's colonial possessions in the Pacific," making it "a likely target in time of war."[22] Indeed, picturing the US fleet at Pearl Harbor as a weapon pointed at Japan's empire, Japanese military leaders advocated for targeting it.[23] This colonial history is how Pearl Harbor was overdetermined as the site of war between the United States and Japan. The channel the navy cut through the first ancestors of Kānaka Maoli accommodated all sizes of ships, including the battleships the Japanese would bomb on December 7, 1941.[24]

The eruption of US extractive and commercial interests in Hawaiʻi, fueled by whaling and sandalwood, helped initiate US military interest in Hawaiʻi and the colonial and ecological violence that turned Puʻuloa into the Pearl Harbor war machine the Japanese would target years later. Over the decades, the knot of colonial pressure got tighter and cut more violently into the lives of Indigenous peoples, species, and environments until these tensions exploded in a Pacific-wide war emanating from Pearl Harbor. Many groups were caught in this explosion: Japanese, Japanese Americans and other Americans, and Pacific and Asian nations.

As this alternate story of Pearl Harbor reveals, Hawaiian anticolonial struggles are not isolated. They have been pivotal to the struggles of distinct nations, groups, and living beings across the Pacific. These histories of entwined

groups, species, environments, and empires require more expansive models of comparative and relational race studies. As Shu-mei Shih, Natalia Molina, and others have shown, prevailing models of comparative and relational race studies have taken great strides toward analyzing how groups are differentially connected.[25] But their vocabularies of relation remain underdeveloped. And their mapping of relations is incomplete, because they do not recognize nonhuman entities as key agencies.[26] The military and ecological violence in the path to Pearl Harbor shows the need for a fully relational study of race and empire that encompasses different human groups and nonhuman species, environments, and things. Various strands in Asian American studies are building toward a relational approach across the Pacific. The field attends to the relations of distinct groups, including Asian diasporas and Pacific Islanders.[27] Recent volumes and issues compiled by Jeffrey Santa Ana, Simi Kang, Lisa Sun-Hee Park, and others articulate another strand that uses multispecies approaches to understand colonial violence in the region.[28] Scholars such as Erin Suzuki are synthesizing these strands.[29] This essay builds on this rich work and contributes to a fully relational approach by assembling a theory of racial entanglements to parse the knotted workings of race and empire in and beyond the Pacific.

Any transpacific relational approach in Asian American studies must grapple with the centrality of Hawaiian and Pacific Islander struggles to the field.[30] Asian American studies has not adequately acknowledged this. Whether subsuming Pacific Islanders into the Asian American category or using framings of the Asia-Pacific, the Pacific Rim, and the transpacific that treat the Pacific as an empty canvas, Asian American studies has often erased Pacific Islanders.[31] The field is responding to Native Pacific critiques of these blind spots. Calls for engaging Pacific Islander studies have spread.[32] Given the history of overlooking Pacific Islanders, and the power of their frameworks to address needs for relational models across the Pacific, Asian Americanists have sought to highlight and draw on Pacific Islander knowledge.

While the highlighting of Pacific Islander knowledge is a welcome development, the impulse to draw on this knowledge can lead to a less welcome development: Asian American scholars adopting Native Pacific knowledge that is rooted in particular places and genealogies.[33] Much transpacific scholarship seeks to critique colonialism and extraction, so it's important for the field to ensure that its methods are not extractive from Native Pacific knowledge. As kuʻualoha hoʻomanawanui notes, "In a Western context, mere study, scholarship, and devotion of one's life to a particular topic is enough to give one 'authority' on the topic; thus many non-Natives can and do claim authority in various realms to which they have no genealogical or cultural connection: Native languages, Native cultures, and Native people."[34] In Asian American studies, how might we

address the marginalization of Native Pacific knowledge without claiming that knowledge for ourselves? I use "we" because as an Asian American scholar, I've been wrestling with these questions. In earlier stages of my research, I came to Kanaka Maoli knowledge to learn from it. I was excited by its possibilities for relational critique. But through feedback I realized that my use of Kanaka knowledge edged into extraction for my own purposes. I include myself in the need to think more carefully toward a responsible relation between these fields. The suggestions here are part of my ongoing thinking.

Pacific Islander knowledge possesses powerful methods for tracing the links of empires, places, and beings across the Pacific. But many of these traditions are not available for non-Natives. I propose that Asian American and transpacific studies should be accountable to Pacific Islander struggles and knowledge without extracting or claiming them. To do this, we should draw on and develop our own cultural, historical, and intellectual traditions while being accountable to the capacities, challenges, and responsibilities that Pacific Islander knowledge and struggles raise. Though distinct from Native Pacific thought, Asian American approaches should recognize our entanglements with Pacific Islanders in the imperial violence spanning the Pacific. This proposal builds on conversations on accountability to Pacific struggles. Paul Lyons and Ty P. Kāwika Tengan urge American studies toward "work that prioritizes the well-being of Pacific places and peoples (holding itself accountable to Islander communities)," while Evyn Lê Espiritu Gandhi reflects on how Vietnamese refugees in Guam are positioned to be accountable to Chamorro decolonization struggles.[35]

I also build on Erin Suzuki's idea of modeling. Discussing Kanaka bodily practices, Suzuki suggests these practices can be a "model" for non-Natives who are serious about addressing their relations to Hawai'i: "Non-Native local bodies might turn to Kanaka Maoli ways of engaging with the terraqueous environments of Hawai'i . . . not through the attempt to *master* Hawaiian land or culture and thus 'make it [their] own,' but, rather, by adopting a perspectival way of seeing that locates them as an integrated part of a . . . constellation of relationships."[36] While acknowledging Kanaka ways of engaging Hawaiian environments, Suzuki rejects the idea of making these traditions our own and suggests a different relation. Suzuki writes that Kanaka models can lead non-Natives to adopt "a perspectival way of seeing" rather than this Kanaka way of seeing. Thinking of a model not as something to copy but as an exemplar, Asian Americanists can learn from the examples set by Pacific Islander models as we develop distinct frameworks. Rather than frameworks to use or replicate, Pacific Islander models can be challenges for Asian American approaches, inspiring the kinds of capacities we might strive toward in our own ways. This modeling would see Native Pacific practices as calls of responsibility for Asian Americans

and other non-Natives to develop practices that honor the accountabilities of living in transpacific relations.

There is no universal perspective for grasping the expansive violence of empire across the Pacific, nor should we seek one, as universalizing is a colonial epistemology. This is a pragmatic reason, beyond the desire to avoid extraction, for Asian Americanists to develop our own approaches. It's crucial to have a range of different methods from distinct groups looking out on the Pacific from their particular locations to see how their struggles are bound with others in transpacific imperial entanglements. Asian American studies has learned to acknowledge Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders as distinct groups with distinct histories. The next step is to investigate what specific entanglements of these groups might be sites for forging important alliances. Asian Americans can contribute to these alliances by addressing our implications in Native Pacific struggles and developing distinct ways of caring for lands, waters, and lives across the Pacific. Fortunately, there are many starting points. Candace Fujikane notes that while "Asian settlers cannot insert themselves" into Kanaka genealogical ties to Hawai'i, Asian diasporas "have their own long and rich genealogical ties elsewhere."[37] These genealogies possess much to draw on, but, as Rachel Lee observes, Asian American studies has often overlooked Asian cosmologies and the relational models they offer.[38]

Many Pacific Islander models pose challenges and many Asian American traditions might answer them. Surveying them all is beyond the scope of this essay. My aim is narrower. I follow the story of Pu'uloa, whaling, and 'iliahi to Kanaka Maoli epistemologies that possess powerful capacities for grasping the entanglements of multiple races, species, and sites in this history. I acknowledge Kanaka concepts of interconnection, mutuality, ties, and web-like intimacies, which exceed colonial ontologies and mappings in ways that entanglement theories are still working toward. I juxtapose this Kanaka knowledge with entanglement concepts from Asian American literature, religion, and scholarship. Kanaka concepts challenge us to sharpen the capacities that Asian American entanglement frameworks strive for. Moreover, the genealogies of Kanaka concepts call Asian Americanists to examine the genealogies of the entanglement concepts we use. Entanglement has become an important term in Asian American studies, but its meanings and lineages are often underspecified.[39] Engaging the questions Kanaka thought poses and developing concepts from Asian American sources, this essay arrives at a racial entanglement theory. Racial entanglements offer a different way of mapping the world and imperial violence that can perceive the world-historical expansiveness of "peripheral" sites; attend to agencies and care across human and nonhuman beings; recognize that anticolonial, antiracist, and

environmental struggles are one; and envision forms of multi-site, multiracial, and multispecies politics in and beyond the Pacific.

The following sections will remap the world alongside Kanaka cartographies; expand the cast in the story of empire alongside Kanaka ontologies and multispecies studies; and turn to an important transpacific Asian North American novel, Ruth Ozeki's *A Tale for the Time Being*, in which we'll find pathways into Hawaiian histories and traditions that theorize colonization and entangled fates across groups, species, time, and space. With racial entanglement theory in place, I'll return to the nineteenth-century trade centered on Hawai'i to trace the impacts of 'iliahi and Hawaiian anticolonial struggle further. Recognizing Hawai'i as a central knot in an expansive entanglement pulls transpacific studies beyond its boundaries and reframes Asian American history.

REMAPPING THE WORLD

To trace how Hawai'i centers expansive histories of imperial violence and anticolonial struggle requires remapping the world. Kanaka practices map the world in ways that challenge other fields to break from colonial cartographies that naturalize imperial nations as the centers of history. Historian David A. Chang shows Kanaka cartographic traditions that centered Hawaiian perspectives. Kānaka have seen Hawai'i "as a land deeply rooted in the Pacific sea of islands, not merely a peripheral dependency of some other power." Chang argues that a different view of exploration and global history is possible "by looking out from the shores of a place, such as Hawai'i, that was allegedly the object, and not the agent, of exploration."[40] Chang's Kanaka cartography starts in a site that seems peripheral, traces outwards from there, and sees how different the world looks from this vantage. Chang alludes to Tongan scholar Epeli Hau'ofa's famous essay "Our Sea of Islands." Hau'ofa countered center and periphery models that view Pacific Island nations as small, isolated, and marginal. With an Oceanian cartography that sees land and water as continuous, he argued that Oceania is not a group of isolated islands but a vast, connected world that Oceania's peoples enlarge through their movements.[41]

Asian Americanists are arriving through different routes at parallel capacities to chart entanglements beyond center and periphery mappings. A great example is Gandhi's archipelagic method for following Vietnamese resettlement on Native Pacific lands. Cognizant of Hau'ofa's mapping, Gandhi draws on the integration of land and water in the Vietnamese language: "As the Pacific Ocean links what . . . Epeli Hau'ofa famously termed a 'sea of islands,' so too does nước

[water, country, homeland] connect the archipelago of Vietnamese refugee resettlement."[42] Gandhi also draws on Édouard Glissant's "poetics of relation," a Caribbean entanglement theory. Glissant's framing of the Caribbean as a point of entanglement is a potent parallel to the effort to remap the Pacific, because he decenters European historiography to highlight the worldliness of islands. Glissant's entanglements emphasize paths that lead "from periphery to periphery," that make "every periphery into a center," and that dismantle "the very notion of center and periphery." His alternative mapping follows relations to sites where agencies are bound in violent tension like the Caribbean.[43] Later in his career, Glissant expanded his concept of relation from a Caribbean-specific phenomenon into a global one, opening possibilities of tracing relations to other sites of violence, which gathered the world.[44]

Challenged by Kanaka cartographies to overturn colonial mappings, Asian American studies might draw from Asian linguistic traditions or Glissant's theories of relation to advance a first feature of racial entanglement theory: To trace racial entanglements, we remap the world, exceeding center/periphery models to see global histories from other sites. We follow relations to sites like Hawai'i where agencies are knotted in violent tension.

EXPANDING THE CAST

To move beyond colonial mappings of the world also requires a different sense of the beings that make up the world. Chang notes that Kānaka knew Hawai'i and its people were linked to the globe "by genealogy, by the gods and other powerful beings, and by the movement of people, birds, and other living things."[45] In contrast to colonial human geographies, Kanaka geography is a more-than-human mapping honoring the range of agencies making the world.[46] Kanaka cartographer Renee Pualani Louis explains that many Kānaka perceive mana (life force) in everything, including things seen by Westerners as inanimate. This perception makes Kanaka ontologies alternatives to colonial ontologies driving extraction.[47]

Kanaka ontologies see lands, nonhuman species, and natural elements as 'ohana (family). Hawaiian literature makes clear that Kānaka are genealogically related to the lands and species of Hawai'i. This relation places humans not as masters over the natural world but as integrated with other living beings.[48] An ethics of care follows. Kanaka literary scholar Brandy Nālani McDougall draws out the "ecological ethics" that the mo'olelo (story) of Papa and Wākea expresses: because the earth is an ancestor, "all life is interconnected and

sacred, and human beings should act according to the values of reciprocity, sustainability, and mutual care."[49] Candace Fujikane observes in the moʻolelo of Keaomelemele a related theme of pilina (connectedness). To recognize pilina is to see that "a harmful event in one place ripples out to all others," but also that restorative changes reverberate in expansive and unexpected ways across connected ecologies.[50] Kanaka poet Jamaica Heolimeleikalani Osorio engages with the moʻolelo of Hiʻiaka to theorize a Kanaka entanglement concept: ʻupena, or "fishing nets of intimacies." ʻUpena bind land, humans, and nonhuman beings in webs of accountabilities. These intimacies include aloha ʻāina, Kanaka love for lands that are integrally part of themselves. Osorio registers that Kanaka ontologies contain lessons for other embattled communities trying to break from European humanism. But she notes that while non-Natives can become *familiar* with Hawaiian practices and lands, they cannot become *familial* to them. Kanaka ontologies are not portable.[51] Their lessons should inspire others to develop their own paths to a more expansive care for the world's agencies.

Multispecies studies is one important field working toward such capacities. Scholars like Anna Tsing and Donna Haraway use the term *entanglement* to describe the interdependence of all species.[52] Multispecies scholars reject Western human exceptionalism to recognize our entanglements with other species. They place nonhuman actors on the same field of social relation and agency as humans. For the study of empire, a more-than-human tracing of agencies is crucial. Tsing offers an example when she describes colonial plantations as multiracial and multispecies systems. Plantations entangled plants, lands, and Indigenous and racialized populations from across the world.[53] In transpacific studies, scholars like Aimee Bahng are integrating multispecies approaches into studies of imperial violence.[54] Such efforts suggest that multispecies studies can help develop capacities of care for lives, lands, and waters across the Pacific. These approaches articulate a second feature of racial entanglement theory: analysis open to the full range of human and nonhuman agencies involved in race and empire. Recognizing nonhuman species, environments, and things as integral to colonization and racialization is a way to account for the full workings of imperial systems and their violence.

Though an Asian American entanglement approach can aim toward similar goals of caring for the lands and beings of the Pacific that Kānaka practice, it cannot do so through a relation of kinship. Asian Americans need our own models of relation across the Pacific. For one generative model, we can turn to Ruth Ozeki's 2013 novel *A Tale for the Time Being*, which develops entangled concepts of care across beings. The novel revolves around Nao, a sixteen-year-old Japanese girl who writes a diary sometime in the early 2000s, and Ruth, a writer living off the coast of Canada who finds Nao's diary on the shore after

the tsunami and Fukushima Daiichi nuclear reactor disaster of 2011. Carried by Pacific currents, the diary binds their lives. Together, they take readers through multiracial/species/site entanglements across time and space. The novel traces long histories of settler colonialism, empire, extraction, and warfare that have devastated peoples, species, seas, and lands across the Pacific. For example, it reveals that the Fukushima Daiichi reactor was built on land stolen from Indigenous Emishi people in the eighth century. The novel attends to nuclear proliferation, US and Japanese empire, and militarism, issues central to Hawaiian movements. These are compelling reasons to think alongside it. But there are also deeper links to Hawai'i, as well as limitations in perceiving these links. I'll return to these shortly.

Nao's diary entangles Ruth, bringing her into unexpected intimacy with a stranger. She becomes familiar with Nao, her father, a computer programmer; her great uncle, a World War II pilot; and her great-grandmother, a Buddhist nun. This entanglement makes distant people palpable for Ruth: "she couldn't help but feel a strong sense of almost karmic connection with the girl and her family. The diary had washed up on Ruth's shoreline, after all. If Nao and her father were in trouble, she wanted to help." This is one of the novel's contributions to entanglement theory. It captures a counterintuitive feeling of intimacy and responsibility that entanglements activate between beings separated in time and space. Nao writes her diary to "you," the reader she hopes the diary will find. She even asks this reader questions:

> I don't know why I keep asking you questions. It's not like I expect you to answer, and even if you did answer, how would I know? But maybe that doesn't matter. Maybe when I ask you a question like "You doing okay?" you should just tell me, even if I can't hear you, and then I'll just sit here and imagine what you might say.
>
> You might say, "Sure thing, Nao. I'm okay. I'm doin' just fine."
>
> "Okay, awesome," I would say to you, and then we would smile at each other across time like we were friends, because we are friends by now, aren't we?[55]

This passage shows the novel's fascinating concept of affinity, even friendship, outside familiar terms of interaction. Even when beings separated by time and space have never met or interacted, they still shape each other in ways that raise questions of care and responsibility. Nao's questions spur further

questions: What if it didn't matter whether the beings can answer each other? Could the questions they ask still matter? What if we rethought ideas of care and political responsibility, not just around those we can answer directly or who can ask questions in the terms we're used to, but also around those who can't ask or answer us in those terms? Such as beings in faraway places, beings in past generations and future generations, beings beyond human communication and personhood who are shut out of conceptions of political community. Maybe we should follow Nao's example and act as if we could ask and answer all these beings. How might that transform our ways of being in the world?

Nao, it turns out, is trying to live up to her great-grandmother Jiko's example, who vowed when she was ordained a Zen Buddhist nun to "save all beings," meaning "all the beings on this earth at any time, and then add in the ones that are getting born every second and the ones that have already died—and not just human beings, either, but all the animals and other life-forms like amoebas and viruses and maybe even plants that have ever lived or ever will live."[56] Youngsuk Chae traces Jiko's vow to a school of engaged Zen Buddhism that sees environmental activism as an extension of Buddhist compassion for all beings.[57] This Buddhist politics of care extends beyond the human and, through karma, beyond the present. Leslie J. Fernandez explains, "Our karma contains the innumerable multiplicity of causal events that led to our existence and similarly we generate karma that reverberates . . . far past our own lifetimes."[58] Karma calls us to responsibilities across time.

Ozeki's novel offers a path through Buddhist religious traditions to capacities that parallel ones seen in Kanaka models. Nao's questions would find rich answers in Kanaka thought. Louis explains, "The 'ohana epistemological framework places humankind as part of a natural knowledge network. Everyone in this world—fish people, bird people, rock people, cloud people, plant people—all do and act according to their genealogical intellect."[59] This capacious idea of persons makes all kinds of life central to ethics and political community. And this idea of intelligence makes clear that all kinds of beings can ask questions of humans; we just need to learn to listen. To map the full constituency fighting for sovereignty and life in the Pacific, racial entanglement theory needs an expansive view of personhood, intelligence, and responsibility. Kanaka thought draws on familial relation to do so, while Nao offers an affiliative model of friendship across beings. Nao's model resonates with David Uahikeaikalei'ohu Maile's proposal of hoa as "an alternative mode of solidarity" for non-Natives who are committed to standing with Kānaka Maoli. Hoa can mean "being friends, partners, or comrades" and "tying, lashing, and banding together." A "process of binding relations together in struggle," hoa emphasizes the antagonisms within alliances between non-Natives and Kānaka Maoli. Crucially, hoa is distinct from

the familial relationship that Kānaka bear to Hawaiian lands and beings.[60] Nao and Maile offer suggestive frameworks for Asian Americans who can't claim a genealogical relation to Native Pacific lands and communities but who have stakes in fostering affiliations with their struggles.

LOOKING BEYOND THE FRAME

A Tale for the Time Being's models of relation are generative, but since it's emerging as a canonical transpacific text, we should consider the novel's limitations too. A chief limitation is that Hawai'i, Kānaka Maoli, and Pacific Islanders are largely absent from the novel's expansive mapping of care across the Pacific. They are also largely absent from criticism on the novel even as critics frame it as a transpacific text.[61] Ozeki's novel and its criticism tend to replicate the erasure of Pacific Islanders in transpacific studies.

Is Hawai'i truly absent from the transpacific histories this novel depicts? As we did with Pearl Harbor, it's important to develop practices for tracing the entanglements of canonical Asian American transpacific texts and histories to Kanaka histories. Consider one scene in which a man watches humpback whales from an Alaskan cruise ship. He confesses that he had been a US bomber pilot in the Aleutian Islands during World War II. Returning from missions, he would unload unused bombs on whales below. If we trace this episode further, it opens more-than-human links to Hawai'i. It's very likely that the whales the pilot bombed were humpbacks. The Bering Strait and the waters around the Aleutian Islands are summer feeding grounds for large populations of humpbacks. In the winter, thousands of these whales return to their breeding grounds in Hawai'i.[62] The whales the pilot bombed were born in Hawaiian waters. They are Hawaiian natives and kin of Kānaka Maoli. The novel repeatedly tracks a more-than-human cast; as Julia Lee notes, the movements of "waves, nonhuman animals, and inanimate objects" drive its story of an interconnected Pacific.[63] In this scene, however, the novel doesn't fully trace these movements. But if readers do so, we uncover Pacific migrations that link this episode of US and Japanese conflict to the fates of Native Hawaiian beings.

This World War II episode echoes an earlier episode of whales being bombed that provides an occasion to trace longer historical relations to Hawai'i. Scholars have noted Ruth's hometown, a port in British Columbia named Whaletown, and the whaling industry behind this name. They have also noted how the incarceration of Japanese Canadians displaced a Japanese family here.[64] As Iyko Day observes, Canadian authorities saw "Indigenous colonization as a useful template

for Japanese internment."[65] Echoing these links, the novel repeatedly references the Coast Salish nations on whose lands Japanese Canadians settled. These are important historical presences, but there is another presence in Whaletown the criticism misses. Ozeki writes of Whaletown, "It had once been a whaling station, . . . although whales were rarely seen in nearby waters anymore. Most of them had been hunted out back in 1869, when a Scotsman named James Dawson and his American partner, Abel Douglass, established the Whaletown station and started killing whales with a new and extremely efficient weapon called a bomb lance."[66] Reading this passage with Hawai'i in mind, it's hard not to think about Hawai'i's role in the whaling industry. Kānaka supplied much of the industry's labor; their sailing and hunting skills were pivotal to the transpacific trade.[67] So who was manning the whaling ships in Whaletown? None other than Kānaka. James Dawson and Abel Douglass were real historical figures who hired Kanaka whalers.[68] Douglas didn't just hire Kānaka, he sailed alongside his wife, Maria Mahoi, who was born in Vancouver to a Kanaka father and Coast Salish mother. Mahoi came from a large Kanaka community that had come to Canada to work in the fur trade. Kānaka intermarried with Indigenous communities and worked in farming, fishing, and whaling.[69] Mahoi's origins point to a little-known history showing the expansive movements of Kānaka. Even in this remote site in Canada, there is Kanaka history—if we look for it.

Whaletown is in Tla'amin territory. The novel acknowledges this Indigenous community and its cosmologies. Reflecting on a crow that is central to the plot, one character recalls "Grandmother Crow, or T'Ets" from whom humans descend in Tla'amin creation stories.[70] The novel attends to Indigenous histories on both sides of the Pacific (the Emishi in Japan, the Tla'amin in Canada), but doesn't extend this attention to Kanaka histories. But if we trace the entanglements of this setting further, we again find Kanaka histories. The Tla'amin nation was linked to Hawai'i even before Kānaka came to this coast. Tla'amin people first encountered Europeans in 1792, when George Vancouver's ships landed on Harwood Island, near where Whaletown would be established.[71] This was the same George Vancouver who described Pu'uloa. Vancouver arrived in North America after stopping in Hawai'i.[72] This route was becoming common as a transpacific trade emerged to bring furs from Coast Salish territories to China via Hawai'i. By 1838, the Tla'amin were encountering fur traders from the Hudson Bay Company;[73] quite possibly, some of the traders they met were Kānaka, as this was the company that drew Kānaka to work on the northwest coast.[74]

Kanaka histories lie just beyond the frame in this novel. There are multiple pathways into these histories, but the novel and its criticism do not pursue them. I see Ozeki's novel and its criticism as an emblem of a broader possibility and imperative in transpacific studies: the field has overlooked Native Pacific

communities, but pathways into recognizing their centrality are near at hand across transpacific histories, stories, and scholarship. They lie just beyond the usual frames. To develop a transpacific studies beyond the frame, we must look not only for Asian American histories in the sites before us, but also for the Native Pacific histories entangled with them. Tracing the connections from this novel to Hawai'i has shown several moves that can help in this work. Transpacific studies should direct more attention to histories before World War II to perceive the many ways Native Pacific communities have long been central to transpacific histories. A second move will be registering the mobility of Native Pacific communities, as David Chang and Epeli Hau'ofa have argued;[75] we can't recognize Kanaka involvements in Coast Salish country if we conflate Kanaka indigeneity with immobility. A third move will be integrating into transpacific histories the native, more-than-human movements—from whales to currents—that have linked the Pacific far longer than human movements have.

While I've noted limitations of *A Tale for the Time Being*'s mapping of the Pacific, I'm not arguing for dismissing the distinct models of relation the novel develops. Because there is no universal perspective on the violence of empire across the Pacific, Asian Americans entangled in this violence must start from where we are. Jettisoning Asian American models that show limitations could increase the pressure to extract Native Pacific knowledge to fill the vacuum. I'm drawn instead to wrestling with the powers and limitations of Asian American models and reshaping them to be accountable to our entanglements with Pacific Islander struggles. I'll look next at how Ozeki's entanglement concepts become expansive methods for tracing transpacific imperial violence when they are made accountable to Kanaka anticolonial struggles.

COLONIZATION ACROSS BEINGS

The stories of Nao's family reveal violence entangling beings across the Pacific. Their stories frame the Pacific theater of World War II as an ecologically devastating inter-imperial conflict that begins with the Japanese invading China for resources, continues over Pacific nations, and ends with the United States launching nuclear cataclysm. Nao's great uncle Haruki was caught in the war after being drafted into the Japanese air force. Like Nao, he kept a diary. He records being sickened by the genocide in Manchuria. He sees the linked violence of extracting Chinese resources and killing Chinese civilians. His story is a tragedy of a Buddhist, pacifist, and anti-imperialist conscripted into an imperial war. He is forced to serve as a kamikaze pilot at the Battle of Okinawa,

which killed thousands of Americans, Japanese, and Indigenous Uchinanchu. The night before his death, he writes, "I have always believed that this war is wrong. I have always despised the capitalist greed and imperialist hubris that have motivated it. And now, knowing what I do about the depravity with which this war has been waged, I am determined to do my utmost to steer my plane away from my target and into the sea. Better to do battle with the waves, who may yet forgive me."[76] Haruki opts out of imperial warfare by giving his life to the ocean, relinquishing racial violence by relinquishing his separation from the natural world. His choice suggests that undoing multiracial imperial violence requires undoing human exceptionalism and the multispecies violence it drives.

The aforementioned episode of the US pilot offers further theorization of how racial, imperial, and multispecies violence are entwined:

> They used to fly out every day, looking for Japanese targets. Often, . . . they would be forced to abort their mission . . . but landing with a full payload was dangerous, so they would discharge their bombs into the sea. From the cockpit of the plane, they could see the large shadows of whales, moving below the surface of the water. From so high up, the whales looked small. They used them for target practice.[77]

US bombers seeking racialized human enemies shifted to bombing nonhuman targets instead, revealing how imperial warfare bleeds across categories. As Jeffrey Santa Ana argues, Ozeki's novel shows that violence against human and nonhuman beings is intertwined.[78] This scene theorizes that the nonhuman world is the practice ground for imperial warfare. Japanese and whales merge in this substitution. The view from the cockpit makes Japanese targets and whales look small and emphasizes the ontological distance between pilot and target. With the whales, this distance symbolizes human exceptionalism: humans above and separate from the nonhuman world we bomb at will. With the Japanese, the distance expresses racial supremacy: Americans above and separate from a dehumanized Other we bomb at will. The key point is that from the cockpit of empire, it's the same view. The episode reveals how human exceptionalism and racialized imperialism are one. These insights resonate with those of Asian American scholars adopting more-than-human approaches to race and empire. Rachel Lee argues that human centrism is integral to settler colonialism; Michelle Huang, Christine Mok, Aimee Bahng, and others note how nonhuman entities are racialized and colonized across the Pacific.[79]

Kanaka anticolonial movements have also theorized the links of imperial violence, human exceptionalism, and environmental destruction. Because "the land cannot live without the people of the land who, in turn, care for their heritage," Trask argues that the colonial destruction of Indigenous peoples leads to the destruction of environments.[80] Since human exceptionalism enables this destruction, human un-exceptionalism is needed to disable it. This lesson is clear from the way that Kanaka ontologies, which do not treat humans as exceptional, feed into Kanaka environmental struggles, which are inherently anticolonial. Noelani Goodyear-Kaʻōpua emphasizes that the sovereignty that Kanaka movements fight for differs from Euro-American sovereignty: "ea, both breath and sovereignty, reflects not a supreme authority over territory but a sacred connection to the land requiring dutiful, nurturing care."[81] As Ozeki's novel and Kanaka movements articulate from distinct perspectives, environmental, racial, and colonial violence are entangled. Environmental violence not only follows from colonial violence; environmental violence itself racializes and colonizes the nonhuman world. In the colonial-human exceptionalist view, Indigenous peoples and racial Others are racialized as dispossessable, disposable, and exploitable, but so too are nonhuman species, lands, and waters. This is a third feature of racial entanglement theory: Peoples, environments, and nonhuman species are racialized and colonized in tandem. Anticolonial and environmental struggles are entangled. In Hawaiʻi and beyond, this means that those fighting for the environment must support the anticolonial struggles of Indigenous nations.

ENTANGLED FATES

The language Ozeki's novel uses to think across its vast cast is entanglement, and not just multispecies entanglement. It connects these ideas to quantum physics. As Ruth and her husband describe their relation to Nao and her family, they realize they are describing quantum entanglement. Entanglement, Ruth explains, is a quantum quirk by which "two particles can coordinate their properties across space and time and behave like a single system." The famous Schrödinger's cat thought experiment provides an example. The cat is in a box with radioactive material and a mechanism that will kill the cat if one of the atoms in the material experiences radioactive decay. The cat and the atom are entangled: "Entangled means that they share certain characteristics or behaviors, in this case their fate within the box: *decayed atom = dead cat*; and *undecayed atom = live cat*. The two behave as one." Atom and cat become "the entangled atom/cat."[82] Turns out quantum physics can help us think about political-theory concepts like shared

fate. Entangled fate is stronger than shared fate though; it thinks about the fates of separate beings as one. They're not even separate beings. Instead of Ruth and Nao, we have Ruth/Nao. The novel's form reinforces this idea. Ruth's world in Canada coordinates properties with Nao's world in Japan, even though the two never directly interact. Ozeki develops a quantum narrative form, an entanglement aesthetics.

The novel's embrace of quantum theory resonates with interest in quantum entanglement in posthumanist and new materialist scholarship, driven by the work of Karen Barad, who draws on physicist Niels Bohr.[83] Scholars in Asian American and transpacific studies are turning to Baradian entanglement, posthumanism, and new materialism to rethink relations.[84] But how do quantum concepts relate to transpacific concerns? The juxtaposition of quantum entanglement, Buddhism, nuclear weapons, and World War II in the novel affords an opportunity that readers can use to trace their connections. Criticism on the novel has shown how Buddhist, quantum, and posthumanist concepts resonate with each other.[85] But there are more than resonances. Quantum physics is seen as a Euro-American field, but many of its founders drew inspiration from Asian religions. In 1937, Bohr observed, "For a parallel to the lesson of atomic theory . . . we must in fact turn to . . . epistemological problems with which already thinkers like Buddha and Lao Tse have been confronted."[86] Quantum theory, then, is a Euro-Asian-American intellectual tradition.

There is also a darker historical link. Quantum theory was essential to conceiving the atom bomb, and Bohr and other quantum physicists worked on the Manhattan Project, which devastated Japanese communities.[87] This impact extended to the Marshall Islands, Te Ao Maohi (French Polynesia), Kiribati, and other Pacific nations affected by nuclear weapons testing. Quantum thought is implicated in transpacific histories of imperial war and environmental destruction. When we trace their genealogies, quantum theory and the Baradian new materialisms built on it are not placeless bodies of knowledge that Asian Americanists import to grasp transpacific histories; they are an Asian/American, transpacific knowledge formation, with a unique purchase on imperial violence in the Pacific.

It's not surprising, then, that quantum entanglement illuminates relations under imperial warfare. In an entanglement, beings distant in time and space are not separate—rather, they are a single entity, their properties and behaviors coordinated, their fates as one. Nao's father understands this. A skilled programmer, he resists his US company when they use his gaming interface for drone warfare. He tells Nao, "A generation of young American pilots would use my interfaces to hunt and kill Afghani people and Iraqi people, too. This would be my fault. . . . the American pilots would suffer, too. . . . the reality of

what they'd done would start to rise up to the surface. . . . That also would be my fault." Nao's father offers a fourth feature of racial entanglement theory: racial violence does not separate, it entangles. Not even technologies designed to separate killers from the killed can get around this. From an entangled perspective, remote drone warfare is a fantasy. There is no such thing as separation from racialized killing. Thousands of miles apart, the American soldier, Japanese programmer, and Afghan civilian never meet or interact, but drone warfare is an entanglement that racializes and shapes their fates as one, inaugurating an American / Japanese / Afghan soldier / drone / programmer / civilian-killer / weapon / interface / victim. The soldier's racialization, role, and way of being co-emerge with the civilian, programmer, and drone, with whom he will be one through time. Nao knows this feeling. One day she holds a knife to the throat of a classmate and senses their potential entanglement: "if I killed him now we would be joined for life, forever."[88] Quantum entanglement points to a fifth feature: the fates of differently racialized groups, species, things, and environments in different times and places are not separate but one entanglement. What appear to be separate racializations, directions of struggle, and behaviors may be the coordinated workings of one entanglement.

Entanglement is much stronger than mere relation. As Barad argues, "To be entangled is not simply to be intertwined with another, as in the joining of separate entities, but to lack an independent, self-contained existence. . . . Individuals do not preexist their interactions; rather, individuals emerge through and as part of their entangled intra-relating." Entanglements flip our usual thinking: not distinct entities first and then relations emerging between them, but relations first and distinct entities emerging within the relations. An entanglement is not a "composite system" made of independent parts; the entire entanglement is "a single entity." It's through specific "intra-actions" (not inter-actions) within an entanglement "that the boundaries and properties of the components of phenomena become determinate and that particular concepts . . . become meaningful."[89] This rejection of individually discrete entities addresses many conundrums the novel raises. How can we understand the strange relationships binding separate beings and places? Well, start by jettisoning the presumption that they must be separate entities to begin with. Then rethink ideas of relation, which assume that distinct entities exist before coming into relation. Instead, relation is the mode through which entities emerge into the world. Such relationality is not news to Kanaka thought. The Kanaka organizer Richard Kekuni Blaisdell writes, "We are lōkahi [in unity] with everything in our cosmos, inherently."[90] Quantum entanglements offer a path for Asian Americanists to approach understandings of inherent relationality that Kanaka have long grasped.

We can rethink worn-out ideas of "race relations" as racial entanglements. In an entanglement, there are no individually determinate entities with inherent properties. So not only are racial traits not essential to a group, their very groupness is produced by a racial entanglement that inseparably binds many racial groups. A sixth feature of racial entanglement theory is that racial groups do not precede racial relations. They are produced by and emerge within racial entanglements—material configurations of the world that activate distinct racial entities and through which racial boundaries, differences, and properties are made meaningful and come to matter. An entanglement activates racial divisions, but these divisions do not separate groups—they bind them. Because racial groups don't precede racial entanglements, we can't begin our analyses with ideas of distinct, given racial groups interacting. We must change the unit of analysis from the discrete racial group to the full racial entanglement that produces distinct racial groups. This is a seventh feature. In race studies, we often pay lip service to the idea of racial formation while designing inquiries around taken for granted and already formed racial groups. Changing the unit of analysis to the full entanglement is a way of heeding Yến Lê Espiritu, Lisa Lowe, and Lisa Yoneyama's call for methods that can "link apparently separate subjects, contexts, and issues whose connections have been rendered unavailable by existing geographical, political, and disciplinary boundaries."[91] The racial entanglement approach refuses to take for granted the categories that empire foists on the world. It refuses to let those categories limit the connections we trace and the solidarities we build.

THE 'ILIAHI ENTANGLEMENT

The preceding sections developed seven features of racial entanglement theory:

1. Look beyond center/periphery models to remap global histories from other sites.
2. Open analysis to human and nonhuman agencies.
3. Peoples, environments, and nonhuman species are racialized and colonized in tandem.
4. Racial violence entangles rather than separates.
5. The fates of differently racialized and seemingly separate groups, species, things, and environments in different times and places may be bound in one entanglement.

6. Racial groups do not precede racial relations. They emerge within racial entanglements—binding configurations of the world that activate distinct racial entities.
7. Change the unit of analysis from the discrete racial group to the full racial entanglement that produces distinct racial groups.

Returning to Puʻuloa and nineteenth-century trade, these features will allow us to trace their relations further. This will show how a racial entanglement practice can re-narrate Asian American history and transpacific studies to center Kanaka struggles. As we saw, the US navy arrived in Hawaiʻi in the 1820s to secure American commerce. At that time, Puʻuloa was already connected to US commerce: it was a harbor for gathering sandalwood before arriving at its export point, Honolulu. But far before US traders came, ʻiliahi was already on the move. A native of Southeast Asia, sandalwood migrated as seeds in the guts of birds, spreading across Oceania. Following feature 2 of racial entanglement theory—analysis open to human and nonhuman agencies—we see that nonhuman movements have made the Pacific world for millennia. So, too, have the movements of Native Pacific peoples. The sandalwood trade did not begin with Europeans: for hundreds of years, Tongans had been trading with Fiji for sandalwood. Indeed, when European sandalwood extraction began in the Pacific, they relied on the existing Fijian-Tongan network. In Hawaiʻi, Kānaka used ʻiliahi for medicine, perfume, firewood, and more. These uses have links to Tahiti and Te Fenua Taʻata, showing how native circulations have long linked the Pacific.[92]

ʻIliahi thrived in Hawaiʻi for centuries. But in less than twenty years in the nineteenth century, the forests were destroyed. Who was involved in this ecocide? Makaʻāinana (commoners) harvested the forests. Aliʻi (chiefs) asked them to cut the forests to sell the wood to American and British traders.[93] These traders coveted sandalwood, because it was one of the goods Chinese traders accepted in exchange for goods Europeans and Americans craved: porcelains, silks, and tea. The Chinese used sandalwood in incense and furniture. In the 1790s, American sailors stopping in Hawaiʻi noted the wealth of sandalwood, placing Hawaiʻi on imperial maps as a site of extraction.[94] Chinese, Americans, and British are familiar characters in histories of global trade. But racial entanglement theory asks that we follow violent relations to see global histories from other sites (feature 1). Where else did the relations lead in and out of Hawaiʻi?

Other sites were already involved, like the northwest coast of North America. Chinese traders accepted silver and some natural goods, so American and British traders scrambled around the Pacific searching for these goods.[95]

Before sandalwood, the scramble centered on sea otter pelts traded by the Tlingit, Nuu-chah-nulth, Chinook, and Coast Salish nations.[96] As we've seen, fur traders routinely stopped in Hawai'i on the way to China, and Kānaka used the trade to migrate to the northwest coast. On that coast, the fur trade nearly drove otters to extinction, with cascading effects on the kelp forests and fish with which they live.[97] The fur trade ran aground by the early 1810s. This pushed Americans to scramble for another Pacific resource: sandalwood. The trade in 'iliahi boomed as the otter trade declined.[98] The exploitation of one ecology offset the exhaustion of another.

Ecologies in Latin America were also involved, as American and British traders sought silver. In the early 1800s, most of the world's supply came from mines run by the Spanish Empire, such as the Cerro Rico de Potosí (in present-day Bolivia).[99] The extraction of silver there depended on environmental destruction and the forced labor of Indigenous Quechua and Aymara peoples. Thousands died in the mines and thousands more from disease, starvation, and toxicity. Anticipating the ecocide of Hawai'i's 'iliahi forests, the extraction of this good bound for China also led to deforestation. The mine's hunger for wood wiped out trees for hundreds of kilometers around Potosí. Contesting these conditions, native workers led the largest Indigenous revolts in colonial Latin America, which gathered force into broader revolutions across the region. Independence struggles from 1809 to 1825 overthrew Spanish rule in Bolivia.[100] With the Bolivian and Mexican wars of independence raging concurrently, silver mining shuttered, derailing the world supply.[101]

For US traders, another problem with silver was profit. Exchanging silver for tea is a wholesale transaction. Their dream was to bring a desirable good to China, profit on it, and then profit again selling tea to Americans. As John Haddad puts it, these traders "set their sights on the 'triple golden round of profits,' which necessitated at least one additional stop in the Pacific between the US and China, to barter for the exotic goods that could replace silver in Canton."[102] Many scholars are familiar with the Atlantic triangular trade, but here's a lesser-known triangle structuring the Pacific. In the early 1800s, a crucial vertex in this triangle was Hawai'i. What could American traders use to replace silver? Sandalwood. Hawai'i, however, wasn't the only vertex. European extraction of sandalwood began in Fiji in 1805. When they depleted Fiji's forests in 1811, traders scrambled to the next sources in Te Fenua Ta'ata and Hawai'i.[103] Here was another shift from one exhausted ecosystem to another, one that makes clear a broader Pacific Islander struggle with sandalwood extraction across places whose cultures, histories, and ecosystems are linked.

In Hawai'i, the China trade fueled a sandalwood fever from the early 1810s to the late 1820s. Hawai'i became known in Cantonese as Tahn Heung Sahn,

the Sandalwood Mountains. Harvesting the valuable heartwood was laborious. Maka'āinana hauled massive bundles to the coast, and many died from exhaustion, malnutrition, and exposure.[104] But to focus solely on their victimization would overlook the range of agencies here. Within the conditions of imperial trade, every level of Hawaiian society weighed strategies, made choices, and shaped the extraction. Stewarding the land, King Kamehameha regulated logging, protected younger trees, and ensured that commoners had time to grow food.[105] Maka'āinana saw the harvest not as coerced but as part of the reciprocal system of donating labor to ali'i who in turn care for them.[106] After the king's death in 1819, an open market ensued. "With an absence of strong central control," Lilikalā Kame'eleihiwa argues, "Hawaiian society became firmly enmeshed in the capitalist net."[107] Some chiefs coerced commoners to harvest by threatening to expel them from their lands.[108] Yet, as Noelani Arista argues, ali'i were not simply tyrants or reckless consumers. The extravagant lists of foreign goods bought with sandalwood in this period originated less from the chiefs' desires than from the desires of American traders competing to bring the newest, most profitable goods to Hawai'i.[109] The chiefs' efforts to buy foreign goods was a strategy to accrue mana as they competed for political power in the vacuum left by the king's death. Even under these pressures, commoners made their own terms. They began trading sandalwood independently, bypassing the chiefs. With traders, they negotiated higher prices or withheld their labor.[110]

Following all the agencies (feature 2), we find that it wasn't just Hawaiian human actors that mattered. 'Iliahi's lifeways mattered too. Sandalwood is fragrant and burns readily, perfect for incense. As a good, it's rapidly consumed. These properties led traders to see it as the miracle good that could balance the tea trade.[111] But 'iliahi also lives in ways that refused to cooperate with imperial traders. The trees grow slowly. They store their oils near their roots, so the part valuable to traders cannot simply be harvested. The whole tree has to be cut.[112] It would've been easier for traders if crops of sandalwood could be harvested each year as would be done with sugarcane later. When 'iliahi's resistant lifeways pulled against the insatiable extraction of the traders, the result was ecocide. By the late 1820s, the "Sandalwood Mountains" were largely bare of sandalwood, impacting all the plants, animals, and groups entangled with them. The cutting led to the loss of soils, canopy, and native species.[113]

The violent relations expanded as the collapse of the sandalwood supply reverberated. Another good British and Americans traded with China was opium, which the British cultivated in India. Starting in the 1820s, the Indian opium trade exploded. The surge was driven in part by competition between the British and Americans.[114] The depletion of natural goods like sandalwood reoriented the American China trade around opium.[115] In the late 1820s, Americans muscled in

on the Indian opium trade and connected China to opium from Turkey.[116] Opium flooded China. The Chinese government responded by halting the opium trade in 1839, leading to the First Opium War, in which the British forced Chinese ports to reopen. The opium trade expanded further, impacting millions of consumers in China and producers in India.[117]

The wealth American traders extracted from the China trade in sandalwood, tea, and opium went on to impact Chinese American history. Holding a huge sum of capital, the opportunity they saw was a system of railroads facilitating westward expansion, an expansion built on dispossessing Indigenous nations.[118] One trader, Asa Whitney, became one of the earliest backers of a railroad across the continent. His proposal reached audiences including Congress and a young Leland Stanford, who later co-founded the Central Pacific Railroad.[119] In the 1860s, the Central Pacific drew thousands of Chinese laborers to build the transcontinental railroad, their bodies moved by some of the same shippers who had moved opium, tea, and sandalwood.[120] This little-known connection between the transpacific China trade, with Hawai'i at its heart, and the transcontinental railroad reframes Asian American history. Like the story of Pu'uloa / Pearl Harbor, it places Kanaka struggles at the center of an iconic episode of Asian American history.

The story of 'iliahi highlights the importance of feature 7: beginning analysis not with discrete racial groups but with the racial entanglement. If we had started with given groups—Kānaka, whites in Britain and the United States, Chinese, Tlingit, Nuu-chah-nulth, Chinook, Coast Salish, Quechua, Aymara, Indians, Turks, Chinese Americans—we would see separate histories. Would we have seen the unpredicted ways they are entangled with each other and with Hawai'i? But if we set out to trace an entanglement, we commit to tracing links without a priori notions of who, what, when, and where are involved. In tracing how this entanglement formed groups, we realize feature 6: racial groups do not precede racial relations; rather, they co-emerge within racial entanglements. The 'iliahi entanglement shifted maka'āinana from kin in reciprocal social structures into abusable labor; 'iliahi from living beings in ecological relations into extractable resources; American traders from buyers of provisions into extractors of Hawai'i's abundance. These identities and traits were not pre-given or inevitable; they co-emerged through the intra-actions of the entanglement. These more-than-human intra-actions point to feature 3: peoples, environments, and nonhuman species are racialized and colonized in tandem.

The 'iliahi story also shows that we cannot limit our mapping of the Pacific. Entanglement analysis refuses colonial mappings and follows agencies toward violent knots like Hawai'i. This brings us to feature 4, racial violence entangles rather than separates. The violent tensions in Hawai'i are signs of agencies bound

across the world. This positions Hawai'i and the struggles of its people, species, and lands as world historical. Taking this idea seriously in transpacific studies would mean expanding the boundaries of the field. Entanglement analysis does not begin with predetermined groups, agents, or geographies. While centering Pacific Islander sites and struggles, an analysis may show that their impacts extend beyond familiar framings of the Pacific. In the 'iliahi story, Hawaiian struggles were entangled with sites in Latin America and India and with empires like the Spanish and British, beyond the usual East Asian and North American players; they extended from the World War II focus in the field to earlier struggles with empire. While transpacific studies has emphasized the meanings of "across," "through," and "from one to another" in the prefix *trans-*, it has not explored the possibilities of "beyond" in this prefix. An entangled transpacific studies could move beyond the bounded and fraught category of the Pacific as necessary. It could, as the stories of Pu'uloa and 'iliahi have, point us to surprising ways that Pacific Islander histories matter to other fields like Asian American studies. And it could open unexpected shapes of solidarity.

The 'iliahi entanglement makes clear the need for different shapes of politics. It linked seemingly separate groups such as Kānaka Maoli and Quechua and Aymara. When the Spanish Empire destroyed environments and enslaved Quechua and Aymara people, these groups revolted and disrupted the silver supply, pushing American and British traders after sandalwood. The release of extractive pressure on one site, Bolivia, increased the pressure on another distant but entangled site, Hawai'i. A politics blind to such dynamics might celebrate the victory for sovereignty in one site without seeing how that victory can shift the violence to another site. To combat imperial entanglements, we need a broader vision of struggle attentive to the contingent tensions and cutting points that can transfer from one knot in an entanglement to another.

Instead of taking given racialized groups and their discrete struggles as the units of anti-imperial politics, racial entanglement politics would seek multiracial, multispecies, multi-site possibilities aimed at whole entanglements. When Hawai'i and its Native people, lands, and ecologies are recognized as central to broader entanglements, Asian Americans and others, who might see no stake in Hawai'i's anticolonial struggle, can see the true stakes. As long as an imperial entanglement persists unchallenged in its expansive tendencies of extraction, settlement, disposability, and violence, it will at a future moment activate for harvesting, dispossession, exploitation, or death yet another region, another group, another species. The question is only who will be next? The fates of racialized groups, species, environments, and beings across the world are entangled. And if this sounds like a mess, in a more hopeful light, it means there are many more ways into the struggle and many more unlikely allies out there.

NOTES

1. See, for example, Lisa Yoneyama, "Toward a Decolonial Genealogy of the Transpacific," *American Quarterly* 69, no. 3 (2017): 471–82.
2. Jon Kamakawiwoʻole Osorio, "Memorializing Puʻuloa and Remembering Pearl Harbor," in *Militarized Currents: Toward a Decolonized Future in Asia and the Pacific*, ed. Setsu Shigematsu and Keith L. Camacho (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 4.
3. Kyle Kajihiro, "Becoming 'Pearl Harbor': A 'Lost Geography' of American Empire" (master's thesis, University of Hawaiʻi at Mānoa, 2014), 28, 30.
4. Kajihiro, "Becoming 'Pearl Harbor,'" 7, 46.
5. J. K. Laughton and Barry M. Gough, "Portlock, Nathaniel," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 2004, https://www.oxforddnb.com/display/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-22586.
6. Christopher A. Cottrell, "Splinters of Sandalwood, Islands of 'Iliahi: Rethinking Deforestation in Hawaiʻi, 1811–1843" (master's thesis, University of Hawaiʻi, 2002), 10.
7. James R. Gibson, *Otter Skins, Boston Ships, and China Goods: The Maritime Fur Trade of the Northwest Coast, 1785–1841* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1992), 255.
8. Cottrell, "Splinters of Sandalwood," 58.
9. Patrick V. Kirch and Marshall Sahlins, *Anahulu: The Anthropology of History in the Kingdom of Hawaii*, vol. 1. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 102.
10. Cottrell, "Splinters of Sandalwood," 59–60.
11. Gibson, *Otter Skins*, 255–56.
12. Cottrell, "Splinters of Sandalwood," 63–65.
13. Kirch and Sahlins, *Anahulu*, 43; "Pearl Harbor," National Park Service, updated September 13, 2024, https://www.nps.gov/perl/learn/historyculture/pearl-harbor.htm.
14. Nathaniel Philbrick, "The Scientific Legacy of the U.S. Exploring Expedition," Smithsonian Libraries, January 2004, https://www.sil.si.edu/DigitalCollections/usexex/learn/Philbrick.htm.
15. Quoted in Kajihiro, "Becoming 'Pearl Harbor,'" 47.
16. "Pearl Harbor," National Park Service.
17. Keaulumoku, *The Kumulipo: An Hawaiian Creation Myth*, trans. Liliuokalani (Kentfield: Pueo Press, 1978), 2.
18. Kajihiro, "Becoming 'Pearl Harbor,'" 63–64, 30, 77.
19. Vernadette Vicuña Gonzalez, *Securing Paradise: Tourism and Militarism in Hawaiʻi and the Philippines* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013), 115; Kyle Kajihiro, "The Militarizing of Hawaiʻi," in *Asian Settler Colonialism: From Local Governance to the Habits of Everyday Life in Hawaiʻi*, ed. Candace Fujikane and Jonathan Y. Okamura (Honolulu: University of Hawaiʻi Press, 2008), 172.

20. Quoted in Kajihiro, "Becoming 'Pearl Harbor,'" 72.
21. Gonzalez, *Securing Paradise*, 13.
22. Haunani-Kay Trask, *From a Native Daughter: Colonialism and Sovereignty in Hawai'i* (Monroe: Common Courage Press, 1993), 64.
23. Kajihiro, "Becoming 'Pearl Harbor,'" 73.
24. "Pearl Harbor," National Park Service.
25. Shu-mei Shih, "Comparative Racialization: An Introduction," *PMLA* 123, no. 5 (2008): 1347–62; Natalia Molina, Daniel Martinez Hosang, and Ramón A. Gutiérrez, eds., *Relational Formations of Race: Theory, Method, and Practice* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2019).
26. Some important recent works in race studies explore more-than-human approaches. See, for example, Mel Y. Chen, *Animacies: Biopolitics, Racial Mattering, and Queer Affect* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012); Leilani Nishime and Kim D. Hester Williams, eds., *Racial Ecologies* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2018); and Rachel C. Lee, *The Exquisite Corpse of Asian America: Biopolitics, Biosociality, and Posthuman Ecologies* (New York: New York University Press, 2014). Many studies in this vein focus on single racial groups, so they do not combine relational race studies with more-than-human approaches.
27. For example, Yến Lê Espiritu, "Critical Refugee Studies and Native Pacific Studies: A Transpacific Critique," *American Quarterly* 69, no. 3 (2017): 483–90.
28. Jeffrey Santa Ana et al., eds., *Empire and Environment: Ecological Ruin in the Transpacific* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2022); Simi Kang and Lisa Sun-Hee Park, eds., "Environmental Entanglements in Asian America," special issue, *Journal of Asian American Studies* 26, no. 3 (2023).
29. Erin Suzuki, *Ocean Passages: Navigating Pacific Islander and Asian American Literatures* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2021).
30. Amy Ku'leialoha Stillman, "Pacific-ing Asian Pacific American History," *Journal of Asian American Studies* 7, no. 3 (2004): 242–43.
31. J. Kehaulani Kauanui, "Asian American Studies and the 'Pacific Question,'" in *Asian American Studies after Critical Mass*, ed. Kent A. Ono (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 123–43; Lisa Kahaleole Hall, "Which of These Is Not Like the Other: Hawaiians and Other Pacific Islanders Are Not Asian Americans, and All Pacific Islanders Are Not Hawaiian," *American Quarterly* 67, no. 3 (2015): 727–47.
32. For example, Yoneyama, "Toward a Decolonial Genealogy," 478.
33. My aim is not to call out specific authors but to note a broad tendency. Asian American scholars have drawn on Kanaka and Native Pacific cosmologies, navigation systems, kinship with the natural world, and more without addressing how Asian Americans can draw on this Indigenous knowledge. This is often done with good intentions of shifting analytical standpoint and bringing visibility to Native Pacific knowledge, but it can have the effect of non-Natives taking Native knowledge practices out of the genealogical relations they are part of, relations that non-Natives are not part of.

34. ku'ualoha ho'omanawanui, "'This Land Is Your Land, This Land Was My Land': Kanaka Maoli versus Settler Representations of 'Āina in Contemporary Literature of Hawai'i," in *Asian Settler Colonialism*, ed. Fujikane and Okamura, 139.
35. Paul Lyons and Ty P. Kāwika Tengan, "Introduction: Pacific Currents," *American Quarterly* 67, no. 3 (2015): 553; Evyn Lê Espiritu Gandhi, *Archipelago of Resettlement: Vietnamese Refugee Settlers and Decolonization across Guam and Israel-Palestine* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2022), 145.
36. Suzuki, *Ocean Passages*, 159–60.
37. Candace Fujikane, "Introduction: Asian Settler Colonialism in the U.S. Colony of Hawai'i," in *Asian Settler Colonialism*, ed. Fujikane and Okamura, 21.
38. Lee, *Exquisite Corpse*, 280n16, 136.
39. Uses of entanglement in the field draw from different meanings and traditions. Rey Chow's theory of entanglement as juxtapositions that reveal surprising links is one influential source. See Rey Chow, *Entanglements, or Transmedial Thinking about Capture* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012). Another important thread emphasizing human-nonhuman relations comes from new materialisms and multispecies studies theorists such as Karen Barad and Donna Haraway. See Karen Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007); Donna J. Haraway, *When Species Meet* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007). But the term has become pervasive enough that Asian Americanists often use it without defining it or citing a specific genealogy.
40. David A. Chang, *The World and All the Things upon It: Native Hawaiian Geographies of Exploration* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2016), viii, ix.
41. Epeli Hau'ofa, "Our Sea of Islands," *The Contemporary Pacific* 6, no. 1 (1994): 151–57.
42. Gandhi, *Archipelago of Resettlement*, 2.
43. Édouard Glissant, *Poetics of Relation*, trans. Betsy Wing (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), 29, 33, 71–75.
44. John E. Drabinski, "Sites of Relation and 'Tout-Monde': Reflections on Glissant's Late Work," *Angelaki* 24, no. 3 (2019): 157–58.
45. Chang, *The World*, 8.
46. Katrina-Ann R. Kapā'anaokalāokeola Nākoa Oliveira, *Ancestral Places: Understanding Kanaka Geographies* (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2014), 58–59.
47. Renee Pualani Louis, *Kanaka Hawai'i Cartography: Hula, Navigation, and Oratory* (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2017), 21.
48. Trask, *From a Native Daughter*, 6.
49. Brandy Nālani McDougall, *Finding Meaning: Kaona and Contemporary Hawaiian Literature* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2016), 117.
50. Candace Fujikane, *Mapping Abundance for a Planetary Future: Kanaka Maoli and Critical Settler Cartographies in Hawai'i* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2021), 3, 7.

51. Jamaica Heolimeleikalani Osorio, *Remembering Our Intimacies: Moʻolelo, Aloha ʻĀina, and Ea* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2021), xxi, 13, 119–20, 135.
52. Anna Tsing, "Unruly Edges: Mushrooms as Companion Species," *Environmental Humanities* 1.1 (2012): 141–54; Haraway, *When Species Meet*.
53. Tsing, "Unruly Edges," 148–49.
54. Aimee Bahng, "The Pacific Proving Grounds and the Proliferation of Settler Environmentalism," *Journal of Transnational American Studies* 11, no. 2 (2020).
55. Ruth Ozeki, *A Tale for the Time Being* (New York: Penguin, 2013), 311, 175.
56. Ozeki, *A Tale for the Time Being*, 18–19.
57. Youngsuk Chae, "Buddhist-Ecofeminist Spiritualities: Beyond the Entanglement of New Materialism and Engaged Buddhism in Ruth Ozeki's *A Tale for the Time Being*," *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction* 64, no. 4 (2023): 610.
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59. Louis, *Kanaka Hawaiʻi Cartography*, 22.
60. David Uahikeaikalei'ohu Maile, "Becoming Hoa: Indigenous Political Thought and the Question of Settler Aloha ʻĀina in Hawaiʻi," *American Quarterly* 76, no. 3 (2024): 617–43.
61. Julia H. Lee, "Transpacific Diasporas," in *The Cambridge Companion to Twenty-First-Century American Fiction*, ed. Joshua L. Miller (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 142–56; Jeffrey Santa Ana, "Transpacific Ecological Imagination: Envisioning the Anthropocene in Ecocritical Asian North American Literature," in *Asian American Literature in Transition, 1996–2020*, ed. Betsy Huang and Victor Román Mendoza (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 15–35.
62. Daniel Palacios et al., "Blue Corridors of the Eastern Pacific Ocean: Opportunities and Actions to Protect Migratory Whales," Technical Report (World Wide Fund for Nature, 2023), 8, 38.
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64. Santa Ana, "Transpacific Ecological Imagination," 20; Michelle N. Huang, "Ecologies of Entanglement in the Great Pacific Garbage Patch," *Journal of Asian American Studies* 20, no. 1 (2017): 100.
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