waka kuaka

The Journal of the Polynesian Society

VOLUME 132 Nos 1 & 2,
MARCH & JUNE 2023 Double Issue

SPECIAL ISSUE:
RE-VISIONING PACIFIC
RESEARCH METHOD/OLOGIES

The Polynesian Society
The University of Auckland, New Zealand

TRANS-INDIGENEITY AND SOVEREIGNTY THAT ENDURES: REFLECTIONS ON MĀORI DIASPORA

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ABSTRACT: "Trans-Indigeneity" broadly refers to two movements: the way Indigeneity moves and shifts with Pacific peoples as we move across oceanic space, and the way that our historical and ongoing transregional relations defy colonial expectations, categories and imaginations. This article offers critical reflections on trans-Indigeneity as a theoretical framework for understanding the complexities of Pacific movements and the accountabilities of Pacific diaspora. With a focus on Māori diasporic movement onto the unceded sovereign territories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, I ask how scholars might complicate an existing focus on Pacific relationality to foreground the vital question of what it has meant to make lives on other peoples' lands.

Keywords: Australia, New Zealand, migration, white Australia policy

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In my ideal Pacific
things wouldn't be
perfect
but everyone would learn
deeply from their mistakes.

—Teresia Teaiwa, excerpt from *In My Ideal Pacific* (2015)

Growing up in Aotearoa I imagined myself as part of the ocean. "New Zealand" felt like an island to me then, full of uncles in diving masks filling our tables with crayfish, aunties cackling so loud in the muddy ocean shallows that their voices flooded bays. My koro (grandfather) was a fisherman and my cousins are too. The ocean is not a metaphor, the ocean is home. It returns us to the Pacific when we lose ourselves in the bindings of the nation state. It teaches us that our smallness is real, even when our connections are vast.

At home in the inland Waikato—too far from the sea—I open my laptop and type the words "my ideal Pacific" into a Google search bar. Teresia Teaiwa's poetry has followed me throughout my PhD, from Wurundjeri land in Australia to Lenape land in the United States and back to the lands of Tainui, where I was born and where I now live. In an act of misdirection the internet sends me elsewhere, to a British travel site that reads, "Choosing

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Iti Prendergast, Sam, 2023. Trans-Indigeneity and sovereignty that endures: Reflections on Māori diaspora. *Waka Kuaka: The Journal of the Polynesian Society* 132 (1/2): 57–72.
https://doi.org/10.15286/jps.132.1-2.57-72

your ideal South Pacific Island" (Audley Travel n.d.). Now I am a character in a bad sci-fi, scrolling past visions of white sand and overwater bungalows, wondering what happens in a storm. "Have you always felt drawn to the South Pacific," the digital travel agent asks, "with its promise of castaway, palm-dotted islands and footprint-free sand?" I scream-laugh because that is the only response I have, and then shriek again when the "South Pacific specialists" explain that each island has its "individual appeal". "For example, French Polynesia has the lion's share of high-sheen resorts, whereas part of Samoa's allure is its lack of development." Then, as if salt water does not connect lands, as if oceans tear apart at perforated lines, we learn that "the South Pacific combines well with a trip to New Zealand or Australia", those two floating nations beyond the Pacific's reach. In my ideal Pacific Epeli Hau'ofa would have a field day. Teresia Teaiwa would roar with laughter. And the rest of us would learn deeply from this mess.

This is not an article about commercial travel agents or their lusting for our sea of island resorts; the thread of horror that runs through this commercial description of the Pacific connects in strange ways to a different kind of disfiguring that haunts Pacific diaspora. Colonial understandings of the Pacific linger like toxins in the seas that connect island to island, shaping not only what happens *to* this place, but how we as Indigenous peoples come to know each other's lands. In the settler nations of Australia and New Zealand, the processes of colonisation have produced the illusion that the organisational power of settler political sovereignty is normal and permanent. Phrased differently, when I travel onto Dharug land, the infrastructure of the nation tells me that I am in the Australian city of Sydney, subject to the terms of the Australian government's borders and laws. If I settle on the land and embed myself in a community, the quotidian administrative realities of my life will be shaped, in large part, by Australian state bureaucracies. Highways obscure the lives of land. Mining poisons water. And nation-state borders—the experiential edge of immigration policy—obscure First Nations' sovereignty. When Australia *allows me entry* it invites me onto someone else's sovereign territories without their permission. When New Zealand welcomes you in through the Auckland airport, it ushers you onto Tainui land, but not without a reminder that your life will be subject to New Zealand's rules and regulations. The material realities of the settler nation mediate the possibilities for Pacific Indigenous relationality—and grappling with this reality can take us to crucial questions about Pacific diasporas.

Most broadly this is an article about Indigenous Pacific methods that help us to understand the complexities of Pacific movements, the accountabilities of Pacific diaspora, and the insidious ways that the ongoing projects of settler nation–building in Australia and New Zealand bear upon Pacific relationships. The "research method" in focus is Indigenous Pacific

theorising—a form of research that often operates alongside and in pursuit of Pacific resistance to colonial power. Over the past decades many Indigenous scholars have developed critical methods for disavowing the centrality of the nation state and foregrounding trans-Indigenous collaborations and relations across regions (Aikau 2015; Allen 2012; Diaz 2019; Hau'ofa 1994; Te Punga Somerville 2012; Wendt 1976). Many of these scholars, including Vince Diaz, have warned that foregrounding trans-Indigeneity cannot mean forgetting the specificities of Indigenous belonging to place. In a 2021 talk alongside Katerina Teaiwa and David Chang, Diaz offered a firm word of advice to those of us in the diaspora: "If you're wanting to reclaim your roots ... but don't want to do the hard work of relating that to the Indigenous people of where you are, then don't do that. ... [B]ecause if you do that you are just like [reproducing] imperialism" ("PI Studies Symposium" 2021). Despite the caveats and recommendations, there remains a scholarly tendency to celebrate diasporic excellence, to borrow the language of university marketing departments, without interrogating the ways that our communities might be complicit in aiding settler projects.[1] In his work on Asian settler colonialism and in his reflections on Haunani-Kay Trask's seminal work on "settlers of colour", Dean Saranillio (2013, 2018) argues for the central importance of reckoning with complicity as a move away from "settler innocence" and towards resurgent solidarity with peoples Indigenous to the lands we live on (Trask 2000; Tuck and Yang 2012). As Saranillio reminds us, "settler colonialism comes at the expense of all of us" (2018: 39).

In my work on the history of Māori movement into and deportation from Australia, I locate the recent Australian deportations of Pacific peoples in the long history of Australian and New Zealand immigration exclusions, arguing for an understanding of racialised deportations as intimately bound to the project of constructing a white sovereign nation on Indigenous peoples' sovereign territories. Since 2014 Australia has drastically increased deportations of New Zealand citizen migrants, from fewer than five deportations in 2013 to 2,776 between January 2015 and August 2022. Māori make up 41.8 percent of New Zealand citizens that the government deports. Pacific peoples, separated from Māori in the New Zealand Police statistics, make up 22 percent of the individuals deported.[2] In my work with a Māori migration activist in Australia, I learnt the intricacies of Australia's current immigration exclusion regimes and began to understand the extent of the crisis: thousands of people are deported; hundreds of thousands are vulnerable to deportation.[3] During that period of research I also grappled with the difficult question of how to intervene in a crisis without reinforcing Australia's sovereignty over unceded First Nations territories. Deportations and immigration vulnerability demand urgency. But that urgency can trick us into thinking that crisis emerges in a vacuum. As Amangu scholar

and organiser Crystal McKinnon argues in her critically important work "Enduring Indigeneity and Solidarity in Response to Australian Carceral Colonialism", movements that call for rights from a settler government can reify the nation in ways that undermine the enduring reality of Indigenous sovereignty (2020: 691–92).

As such, this article asks how we, as Pacific scholars, might think through the histories of our diasporas in ways that foreground the specificities of enduring Indigeneity. To divest from the imperial scripts that turn Indigenous territories into settler nations, we need to navigate through the sometimes-discomforting subject of our own accountability, responsibility and complicity when we make lives on other peoples' occupied territories. How, for instance, might we critically reflect upon the fetishisation of others' lands as sites of milk and honey? And how do we ensure that a growing attentiveness to Pacific diaspora does not elide the enduring sovereignty rooted in the foundational kinship between Indigenous peoples and our territories? I know these questions are discomforting because when I raise them in any semipublic sphere there is often a degree of resistance. In particular, the word "complicity" can sound like an accusation (Saranillio 2018: 36). Grappling with the complexities of our own movement does not erase the material reality of Māori struggles. As Indigenous scholars have long stressed, we can account for the complications and complicities of our lives on other peoples' lands while simultaneously acknowledging the realities of ongoing colonisation in our own communities, on our own territories and in relationship to our own Indigeneity (Kauanui 2016; Trask 2000). In the context of Māori diaspora in Australia, the word complicity is not an accusation but an invitation to think critically about our historical and ongoing presence on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' homes, and in the context of Australian settler nation–building.

Australia is always trying to convince us that its nation-state project is the real thing, and that First Nations sovereignty is a relic (Moreton-Robinson 2015). In truth, as McKinnon (2020) reminds us, "settler sovereignty is unstable and in a constant state of becoming" (p. 696). Indigenous sovereignty endures because it is rooted in the foundational connection between people and land. The challenge for Pacific scholars who grapple with diaspora is not only to foreground the relationship between ourselves and peoples Indigenous to the land but to foreground and invest in the relationship between our diasporic futures and the enduring Indigeneity—the enduring material sovereignty—that Indigenous peoples possess. Engaging with the reality of another person's sovereignty can mean forgoing some of the desires that we have for our future on their lands. But it also means the more expansive, resurgent and liberating possibility of collaborating towards futures that defy the settler nation's constraints upon our lives (Aikau 2015).

LAUNCHING: GRAPPLING WITH TRANS-INDIGENEITY

If I employ the metaphor of a waka (canoe), as we so often do in Pacific studies, then the launching place for this article is my own waxing and waning discomfort with the framework of trans-Indigeneity. "Trans-Indigeneity" broadly refers to two movements: the way Indigeneity moves and shifts with Pacific peoples as we move across oceanic space, and the way that our historical and ongoing transregional relations defy colonial expectations, categories and imaginations (Aikau *et al.* 2016; Allen 2012; Diaz 2019; Ka'ili 2017). As Chickasaw literary scholar Chadwick Allen explains in his 2012 monograph *Trans-Indigenous*, the "trans-" is a call to decentre nations, borders and colonial boundaries so that we might read Indigenous texts in relation to each other rather than in comparison to each other. That is, the "trans-" in trans-Indigeneity is a refusal of the colonial notion that Indigenous peoples and texts are bound in place to the islands or lands where colonisers first "encountered" us.

As an analytic, trans-Indigeneity offers a powerful disavowal of the nation state's centrality, and a powerful disavowal of the colonial definitions of Indigeneity that have fixed us in place to discrete lands. In addition, trans-Indigeneity foregrounds collaborations between Indigenous peoples as productive sites of meaning, both historically and into the future. That is, through our material relations with each other we produce new practices of kinship, knowledge-sharing, organising, resurgence and economy that forge pathways out of a world organised by the nation state's bureaucracies. Trans-Indigeneity can therefore help us to think about our Pacific Indigenous futures in relation instead of in comparison or, worse, in competition.

The problem with evoking the trans-Indigenous, at least at the moment, is the tendency to focus so heavily on the resurgent potentials of Indigeneity-in-movement that we risk eliding the enduring realities of Indigenous sovereignty on land. Key scholars of trans-Indigeneity warn against eliding Indigenous sovereignty (Diaz 2021). But the warning on its own is not enough to disrupt a diasporic tendency to inscribe our future aspirations onto other peoples' lands in ways that replicate colonialism. This is especially true when the settler state thrusts diasporic people into crisis.

Since 2012 Vince Diaz, along with others, has built on Allen's literary-focused framework to explore the potential of trans-Indigeneity for helping us to reimagine the meanings and expressions of Indigeneity. In his 2019 article "Oceania in the Plains", Diaz describes his own search for "indigenous vernacular practices and frameworks that allow for expansiveness without sacrificing specificity" (p. 3). At the time Diaz described a growing and "problematic valorization and reification of the tropes of expansiveness and fluidity" in scholarly and popular Pacific discourse (p. 2). For example, the repeated evocation of "our sea of islands" can emphasise Pacific relationality

without necessarily accounting for the specificity of place—or for the specificity of Epeli Hau‘ofa’s argument in his oft-cited essay, “Our Sea of Islands”. In the essay Hau‘ofa warned against a prevailing macropolitical understanding of Pacific islands as “much too small, too poorly endowed with resources, and too isolated” to ever rise out of economic dependency on the “largesse of wealthy nations”, including the Pacific settler nations of Australia and New Zealand (1994: 150). These details are vitally important, because when Hau‘ofa argued that “Oceania is vast, Oceania is expanding” (p. 160), he was not writing metaphorically. Instead, he was arguing that “the perpetrators of the smallness view of Oceania” (p. 159) were looking at the Pacific through a faulty colonial frame, seeing isolated islands at risk and missing the vast networks of on-the-ground trade, resources, cultures, ideas and kinship that rise into view once you understand the islands as part of a connected whole (Hau‘ofa 1994). The material consequences of the smallness view bore out in development policies that produced structures of economic dependency dressed up as “aid”.

When Diaz uses the term trans-Indigeneity he engages with the specificity of Hau‘ofa’s argument: if we see our Indigeneity as fixed-in-place to discrete islands, then we see ourselves in colonial terms (Teaiwa 2006). This does not mean that my status as tangata whenua (person of the land) travels with me like a flag that I can plant in the lands of Sāmoa, or the Mariana Islands, or Niue, claiming the islands as home because I am of the ocean. Instead, the “trans-” in trans-Indigeneity is about foregrounding the very specific ways that Indigeneity was and is both mobile and co-constituted in specific contexts. Diaz’s work, for instance, is grounded in “the effort of one group of displaced Micronesians, from the island of Chuuk, Federated States of Micronesia, to practice traditional outrigger canoe culture and traditional navigation … in waters and lands—rivers, lakes, and skyways—of the northeastern plains world of the Dakota Makhóčhe” (Diaz 2019: 2). He works with a trans-Indigenous frame because it reflects the reality that Indigeneity has and can be forged “in productive relations with histories, narratives, and technologies of travel or geographic reach”, and “in strategic relationship with other equally deep and moving indigenous peoples and traditions from elsewhere” (p. 3).

The turn to trans-Indigeneity can help us to think beyond settler futurity and towards a resurgent Indigenous politics that does not need colonial institutions, including settler nations (Aikau 2015; Aikau *et al.* 2016; Etherington 2022). For many decades, Indigenous scholars have stressed the importance of decentring the nation as the object of analysis (Coulthard 2014; Hau‘ofa 1994; Simpson 2014; Smith 1999; Teaiwa 2006). We can, as Alice Te Punga Somerville and Shino Konishi both argue, contend with our expansive Indigenous worlds and relations without showing any interest in settler colonies and their expectations for our lives (Konishi 2019; Te Punga

Somerville 2021). But sometimes the disavowal of the nation as an analytic can lead us to elide the ugly ways that our Indigeneity—the ways we practise and understand both our rootedness to territory and the Indigeneity in our routes—is also informed by our historical and ongoing relationships with nation states that occupy our lands and other peoples' territories (Camacho 2008). One example is in works that celebrate the persistence of language and culture in diaspora, without ever mentioning the ongoing sovereignty of Indigenous peoples in that place.

WHAT TRANS-INDIGENEITY CAN ELIDE: A 1905 CASE STUDY

One difficulty of trans-Indigeneity as a framework is that in an effort to displace the settler nation as the central object of analysis, we can sometimes overlook the more insidious ways that the persistence of settler national infrastructures, logics and future-oriented aspirations come to mediate our relations. In the next section of this article, I look to a 1905 example of how Australia and New Zealand, two white settler nations, collaborated to produce a mirage of white national legitimacy in the place of Indigenous sovereignty. In a historical case of Māori deportation from Australia the loud absence of Indigenous relationality tells us about the "intimacies" of colonisation, where the word intimate refers both to scale and to the very personal ways that settler notions of place, relationality and politics can come to inform our own understandings of Indigeneity (Teves 2018).

Historical specificity is important, and the historical roots of Māori migration into Australia differ dramatically from the origins of many other Pacific peoples' migrations. From 1905 until the 1970s, Māori were the only predominantly non-white group to be exempted from Australia's blanket ban on migrants of colour.[4] Not all diasporas are forged in the same ways, and there is a stark difference between diasporas born of violent dispossession and diasporas born of mobility—even when "mobility" takes place in the context of colonisation. Kāi Tahu historian Michael Stevens has written about the 1800s movement of Kāi Tahu tūpuna (ancestors) to Sydney, describing their voyaging as an expression of Indigenous agency (Standfield and Stevens 2019; Stevens 2018). Meanwhile, in the same time period, British colonists conspired to forcibly remove South Sea Islanders from their homes, enslaving Pacific peoples in Queensland (Banivanua-Mar 2007; Foley 2011; Mann 2018: 6, 100–101).

In February 1905 two Māori sheep shearers travelled from so-called New Zealand to so-called Australia. The men purchased tickets in Pōneke, commonly known as Wellington, at the southernmost tip of Aotearoa's northern island. In one of the men's accounts, the sales clerk offered an ominous warning: Australian customs had special rules for "natives". The men would need to pass a language test and buy return tickets proving their

intent to return to Aotearoa after a few months. But when the men arrived in Sydney a customs officer immediately denied them entry. Customs listed the men for deportation, detained them in a stiflingly hot cell and sent them back to New Zealand on the next available ship (*Matuhi* 1905; *Richmond River Herald* 1905).

Four years earlier, shortly after Australia's federation as a commonwealth nation, the new government enacted the white Australia policy. The policy was a set of laws and regulations prohibiting non-white migrants from entering Australia and facilitating the deportation of thousands of South Sea Islanders. From its inception in the late 1800s the white Australia policy was deeply aspirational (Moreton-Robinson 2015). By prohibiting non-white migrants, the Australian government articulated its hopes for nationhood. Australia was to be an almost impossible place, a homogeneously white island looming on the imagined edge of the vast Pacific. For early 1900s Australian policymakers, the Pacific and its peoples posed a threat to Australia's future (Foley 2011: 609). The governmental fear materialised in legislation, in the policing of First Nations and Pacific communities and in deportations (Banivanua Mar 2012; Foley 2011; Mann 2018).

The two Māori men did not know about the policy when they purchased tickets to sail, but after their forced return to New Zealand one of the men raised complaints with New Zealand officials. In an interview conducted at the time he reportedly told a journalist, "We are British subjects, and I thought we were as good as anyone" (*Richmond River Herald* 1905). News of the deportations offended Pākehā (white New Zealander) commentators, and New Zealand politicians sent probing telegrams to their counterparts in Australia. In the New Zealand settler imaginary Māori were "British subjects" on our way to total assimilation into the settler population. "It is simply absurd", one commentator wrote, that "a couple of Maoris [sic], representing a fast dying race-fragment … should be forbidden" (*Wairarapa Daily Times* 1905). Less than a month later the Australian premier intervened, promising outraged New Zealanders that this accident of deportation would not be repeated. From March 1905 onwards, Māori were, as a matter of law, to be allowed into Australia in the same way as white New Zealanders (*Hawera and Normanby Star* 1905). The exemption marked a turning point in Australian immigration policy and in the structural relationships between Indigenous Pacific peoples, including First Nations peoples in Australia and Māori in New Zealand.

One of the perversions of settler colonialism is that the norms produced by settler nationhood—the material force of national borders; the organisational power of nation-state laws—act like a frame on how we understand the past (Trask 1993). Because settler governance persists in the present, we can imagine that the organisational dominance of settler statehood is somehow

natural. In the case of the two Māori sheep shearers, for instance, it feels historically "unsurprising" that the men understood First Nations territories as Australia—who, in 1905, could have travelled by boat to Sydney and expected anything other than "Australia"? But this rhetorical question, laden with assumptions, forecloses the possibilities for understanding what the 1905 exemption reveals about the tensions between Pacific Indigenous worlds, on one hand, and the political modalities of white settler nations on the other.

In my doctoral work I write in more depth about the threads that shoot off from the sheep shearers' interaction with the machineries of white nation building in the early twentieth-century Pacific. For the sake of this article, I want to point at the power Australia and New Zealand possessed to determine who deserved a future in the colony, and who did not. In the early twentieth century the Australian and New Zealand governments located Māori in relatively close "proximity to whiteness", to draw on the language of critical legal and race studies scholar Cheryl Harris (1993). When I say that Māori were located "proximate to whiteness" in 1905, I am not talking about colour or about "privilege" in a colloquial sense—instead, I am talking about colonial structures and racial stratification. Australia understood Māori as "essentially white" British subjects because New Zealand Pākehā colonists reported that Māori had been so effectively assimilated that we would soon be extinct; colonisers imagined us as "noble", "war-loving", but not a serious existential concern to settler futurity (see also Warbrick 2021). As the New Zealand prime minister, Richard Seddon, promised his Australian counterparts in 1905, Māori were no threat to the white Australia policy; our sovereignty was imagined as a faint haunting of the distant past (*Waikato Times* 1905). From this position of imagined assimilation Māori migrants received a legal entitlement to live in Australia while, in the same year, the Australian government deported thousands of South Sea Islanders. After 1905, Māori *inclusion* into Australia positioned us outside the white Australia policy's definition of an "undesirable migrant".

There are two key ways that Australia's exclusionary borders and New Zealand's practices of assimilation mediated Pacific Indigenous relations in the moment of 1905. First, the material force of immigration bureaucracies disfigured First Nations territories. As Aileen Moreton-Robinson stresses throughout her work, the fiction of Australian settler sovereignty has long relied on the Australian state's ability to hold up a curtain over the realities of the land, framing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' homes as vacant sites for migrant futures (Moreton-Robinson 2015). Second, in the case of the two Māori sheep shearers, we see an example of how settler nation states ensnare Indigenous people by binding our identities to the nations that occupy our territories. Colonisation in New Zealand shaped the possibilities for locating ourselves in relation to other Pacific peoples (Te

Punga Somerville 2012). This is not to say that Māori were not in relation with Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and South Sea Islander peoples in other ways—in 1905 Māori already lived in Australian towns (Banivanua Mar 2019; Te Punga Somerville 2012, 2014). Instead, I am stressing that the materiality of the national border produced an absence of relationality, so that when a Māori person tried to move onto Dharug land, for instance, their experience was heavily mediated by Australian borders and New Zealand notions of subjecthood.

The Māori sheep shearers' appeal to their rights as British subjects reminded me of my own appeal to "rights" more than a century later. In April 2014, months before deportations of Pacific people increased, I wrote a well-intentioned and glaringly problematic article for *Guardian Australia* lamenting the lack of social security for New Zealand migrants in Australia. An editor titled the piece "New Zealanders in Australia: Neglected and Vulnerable", amplifying the lingering sense of entitlement already present in the article. The writing reflected my own frustrations as a young person on a temporary visa and highlighted the precarity of New Zealand citizens who had lived in Australia since childhood without any access to permanent residency. By way of historical background, since the early 1970s the Australian government has allowed all New Zealand citizens to live and work in Australia, on First Nations territories, without applying for a visa (Hamer 2014). Until the year 2000, New Zealanders in Australia could apply for permanent residency and later citizenship after a few years of continuous residency in Australia. In 2001 the Australian government, led by the conservative prime minister John Howard, altered the trans-Tasman travel arrangements and dissolved the pathways to permanency; from 2001 onwards, New Zealand citizens could move to Australia, but they would no longer become eligible for permanent residency after two years (Hamer 2012; Kukutai and Pawar 2013). This was a significant shift because it meant that New Zealand citizens could reside in Australia for decades without ever having access to social security networks—severely limiting access to domestic violence services, emergency housing assistance, disability and health services and youth social security payments (youth allowance), among other vital safety networks.

In the article I elided Indigenous sovereignty and ended by staking a claim to Australia as my home. I could choose to forget the article, relegating it to the field of past mistakes, but it represents a sharp reminder of how easy it is to erase the specificities of place when faced with the injustices produced by nation-state bureaucracies. In 2014 I knew that I lived on unceded Kaurna land, but Australian immigration practices dictated the realities of life for me and for many Pacific peoples living in Australia. At the time of the article I was trying to arrange health services for a New Zealand citizen relative who

had no means to leave Australia and who was denied access to Australian services because of their immigration status. This personal experience—along with what I learned from Māori migration activists—taught me about the dire material consequences of immigration uncertainty. Australia possessed much of the organisational power over our lives and so I developed a politics of demanding "rights" in a way that reified the nation state and undermined the reality of Indigenous sovereignty (McKinnon 2020: 700).

I bring up this example not as a performance of self-flagellation but as an example of how the state tricks us and lures us in. I also raise the example because, in 2014, I was not an academic or a researcher. I was a migrant frustrated with the Australian government. This is not an excuse, or a move to "settler innocence" (Tuck and Yang 2012). Instead I am trying to illustrate the insidiousness of settler colonialism's trappings; in toying with our lives, the nation makes its sovereignty *feel* real. Migrant settler complicity in ongoing colonisation is a product of settler colonialism's structures for sustaining its own sovereignty: borders and immigration practices are nation-state tools for performing organisational power.

PACIFIC METHODS FOR KEEPING AN EYE ON THE STATE

The methodological question, then, is how to keep an eye on the intimacies of colonialism as we work with analytical frameworks that foreground Indigenous histories and emphasise the enduring realities of Indigenous sovereignties.[5] In her monograph *Consuming Ocean Island*, Katerina Teaiwa provides one model for tracing the disfiguring impacts of Australian colonial violence on Banaban relations to land, place and kin, without reifying the nation as the object of analysis (Teaiwa 2014). Teaiwa adopts a method of assemblage. Throughout the book different regional sites and time periods come into view because, collated, they complicate what it means to think about Indigeneity and "migration" in the Pacific. From the 1920s to the 1960s, colonial excavators forcibly removed Banaban ancestral land and converted it into a commodity—phosphate fertiliser. Agricultural settlers then used Banaban bones, now fertiliser, to transform other peoples' Indigenous territories across the Pacific. In Aotearoa New Zealand, phosphate converted so-called "barren" Māori land into "productive" agricultural territory (Teaiwa 2014). To illustrate the non-linear ways that colonisation produced dispossession, Teaiwa places a chapter that describes the experiences of white Australian mining families on Ocean Island across the first four decades of the twentieth century alongside chapters about the chemical structure of phosphate, its application to New Zealand farmland across the twentieth century and ethnographic accounts of her family watching television in Fiji in the 2000s. For Teaiwa, Banaban diaspora—which includes people and also land—comes into view through histories shaped by colonial yearning

for resources and power, but told with Banaban land in the foreground. Working from archival and ethnographic assemblage, Teaiwa asks about the multiscalar ways that colonial capitalism reorganised Banaban relations and Indigeneity specifically, and Pacific relationality more broadly (Teaiwa 2014).

These questions operate as both material problems and a metaphor for making sense of the relationship between empire and dispossession in the Pacific—they come into view in a nonlinear fashion, because that is how the archive of phosphate mining probed with Banaban experience in the foreground reveals dispossession. To tell phosphate's history is, for Teaiwa, to piece together multiple local histories throughout Oceania, to depart from a nation-based method of historical enquiry, and to attend to what the archive reveals when it is asked to answer to Indigenous experiences. Linear historical narratives risk plotting the entanglements of Oceania's past onto a foreign frame because they do "not resonate with the partial and often fragmented manner in which Banaban land or people, or any of the other agents involved in mining, experienced the last one hundred years" (Teaiwa 2014: xvi). Teaiwa foregrounds the Pacific as a site produced by historical movement rather than as a site defined by nations, but she also retains a crucial critique of how colonial desires—economic and otherwise—have produced havoc, loss and displacement for Indigenous peoples (see also West 2016).

To return to the central concerns of accountability, complicity and complexity, I want to emphasise the possibilities that this method of assemblage offers to those of us working on questions of Pacific diaspora, or thinking with the frameworks of trans-Indigeneity. If a focus on trans-Indigenous relations helps us to disavow the nation's centrality, then the method of following threads of violence, mess or colonial desire can help us to know when it is time to bring settlers and settler nations back in as an object of critique. To disavow the nation we often have to deal with the mess that imperialism makes—including the very real ways that colonialism in the Pacific has shaped how we understand ourselves and our territories in relation to others.

I started this article with my own connections to the Pacific. The ocean is not a metaphor—the ocean is home (Teaiwa 2006). It returns us when we lose ourselves in the bindings of the nation state. It teaches us that our smallness is real, even when our connections are vast. I cannot offer conclusions when it comes to grappling with accountabilities in diaspora, but my experiences as a diasporic person and researcher have taught me about the harms of letting accountability slide. If we celebrate our movements but forget whose land we stand on, we celebrate our success but forget the routes, the connections, the dispossessions and the sovereignties that forged Pacific pasts and shape Pacific futures. In Teresia Teaiwa's ideal Pacific none of us are perfect, but in learning deeply from our mistakes we might navigate towards resurgent collaborations that simultaneously honour the breadth of Indigeneity-in-movement and the reality of Indigenous sovereignties that endure.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author wishes to thank the editors of *Waka Kuaka: The Journal of the Polynesian Society* alongside fellow contributors and peer reviewers. The author also wishes to thank Tamsin Green for feedback on an early version of the article.

NOTES

1. Rather than picking at specific works, which would unfairly target select individuals, I am going to gesture to the broad sweep of diasporic research that forgets to acknowledge or engage with the sovereignties of Indigenous peoples, including some that have framed my own whenua (land) as a site of milk and honey.
2. Statistics obtained via Request for Information, 16 September 2022, from New Zealand Police under the Official Information Act 1982. For more on the legal mechanisms for the "Section 501 deportations", as they are known colloquially, see Duckett White (2020).
3. As part of my doctoral research I conducted research into the immigration laws and practices that affect New Zealand citizen migrants in Australia, 2020–2021, under the guidance of Māori migration activist and expert Erina Morunga.
4. National Australia Archives A1, 1911/10657: Examination of persons under the Immigration Restriction Act. https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRetrieve/Interface/ViewImage.aspx?B=11098
5. I use Katerina Teaiwa's work as one example; see also Powell (2021).

GLOSSARY

The terms included in this glossary are te reo Māori.

koro	grandfather
Pākehā	New Zealander of European descent
tangata whenua	person of the land
tūpuna	ancestors
waka	canoe
whenua	land

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