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OCEANIA IN THE PLAINS: THE POLITICS AND ANALYTICS OF TRANSINDIGENOUS RESURGENCE IN CHUUKESE VOYAGING OF DAKOTA LANDS, WATERS, AND SKIES IN MINÍ SÓTA MAKHÓČHE[1]

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Introduction

Of the vast water world traversed by Pacific Islander navigators aboard outrigger sailing water craft, the American environmentalist Ken Brower once observed with tongue in cheek that, in the Central Carolinian region of Oceania, "there are no purple mountains' majesty, no amber waves of grain" (Brower 1983: 103–04). There was, however, trumpeted Brower, "*the ocean* . . . the blue, wind-kerneled fields of the Pacific and the mountains of following seas." And the canoe, "the means of escape into that big country." He explained, "the canoe brought drama into Carolinian lives, and heroism. It loosed Carolinians on the vastness of the planet and it kept them in touch with the rest of mankind."

Around the same moment that Brower was writing about the unabated survival of Central Carolinian traditional voyaging culture despite centuries of four colonial administrations, political leaders of the larger Micronesian region, of which the Central Carolines are a part, were negotiating new, modern, quasi-independent nations in "free association" with the United States. While it is important to recognize the political status and relationship of "free association" as a misnomer, a euphemism, really, for neocolonialism with (or under) the United States—the arrangement institutionalizes US Congressional plenary as well as economic power over the constitutions and peoples of these

microstates—it is important to know that the terms of economic assistance to these microstates also include visa-free travel to and *residence in the United States* for the Micronesians. As we know from native studies, and what indigenous people can do through travel and opportunity, indigenous agency can just as well frustrate as much as help consolidate the machinations of settler colonialism and policy (Diaz 2010).

In this article I want to tell a political and cultural story about 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 using stars, waves, and clouds, and sea creatures, but in waters and lands—rivers, lakes, and skyways—of the northeastern plains world of the Dakota Makhóčhe of present-day Minnesota and North Dakota. In an unfolding tale that involves learning Dakota land, water, and sky knowledge as a precondition for learning how to become a traditional Micronesian navigator in and for the twenty-first century, I will also pause along the way to model an analytic and a political framework sometimes referred to as "transindigeneity" (Allen 2012) that can help us imagine new ways of being indigenous but that also describes deep aboriginal cultural belongings to specific places while also permitting wide lateral reach across time and space, albeit in ways that do not lose familiar and signature indigenous belongings and accountabilities to place, to site, and cultural specificity.

At the end of the second decade of the twenty-first century, through what we might now regard as the modern *political canoe of free association* with the United States, close to half of contemporary Chuukese now live outside their island region, and an increasing number firmly in country where "God shed his grace on thee," to riff off of Brower's own riffing off the words of America's "unofficial national anthem," *America the Beautiful* (Sherr 2001). What does this tale of indigenous Micronesian diaspora and globalization of America have to do with American Indians, and this tale for critical indigenous Pacific Studies? One answer lies in how the shared building and sailing of traditional outrigger canoes by displaced Micronesians in the eastern prairies of Dakota can center the concept of transindigeneity to give us a better analytic on native cultural persistence and political resurgence and a pretty good practice to counter the persistence of US settler colonialism. But there is also a tale, here, about the ocean in the prairies, and the terrain of Oceania, as these are deeply interrelated with, and so as to be co-constitutive of, sky and indigenous subjectivity, a tale that can counter other historical and intellectual developments. For example, for over the last decade or so, in both scholarly and popular discourse about Native Pacific culture and history, there has emerged a problematic valorization and reification of the tropes of expansiveness and fluidity, marked by a tendency to play up and favor the moniker "Oceania" over the term "Pacific

Islands," and with accompanying claims about the nature of oceanic indigeneity. Later, I'll return to these valorizations and reifications, including their political and analytical costs. Against these hegemonic tendencies—hegemonic in the sense that they operate noncoercively and through sympathetic, even celebratory and benevolent rhetorics—I've been trying to think, write, teach, and research in ways that center indigenous vernacular practices and frameworks that allow for expansiveness without sacrificing specificity, ways that ground indigeneity without essentialist insularities, and that might be nudged mindfully into potent forms of decolonized indigenous futures. Those who know my work know that I have tried to do this through indigenous watercraft and traditional knowledge involving seafaring. This current project continues that work as it now involves acknowledging, understanding, and operationalizing through honoring deep indigenous ideas about the fundamental interrelationality of all life and supposedly nonliving forms.

In this article, I bring together indigenous water craft and larger "crafts" or technologies and narratives of traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) in Oceanic and Anishinaabe and Dakota worlds to critically illustrate the cultural and political possibilities of transindigeneity. By transindigeneity, I mean the claims and conditions of aboriginal belonging to specific places, but as such discourses of vertical depth or rootedness (in deep time and place) are forged in two additional processes: (1) in productive relations with histories, narratives, and technologies of travel or geographic reach, here referred to as lateral or horizontal routedness, and (2) in strategic relationship with other equally deep and moving indigenous peoples and traditions from elsewhere (Aikau, Goodyear-Kaʻōpua, and Silva 2016; Allen 2012; Cook 2018; Diaz 2016a). Furthermore, inasmuch as such expansive and fluidic cultural legacies of indigenous American Indian and Pacific "crafts"—the material vessels and the equally material forms of knowledge associated with the vessels—reveal the importance of and necessity for technical and geographic grounding that make for cultural specificity, this transindigenous framework also offers ways to counter the effects of settler colonialism and larger forms of colonial discourse that operate by erasing or disavowing prior indigenous presence and knowledge as preconditions of self-articulation. Here, I want to show how a critically informed canoe cultural revitalization practice centered on indigenous TEK and committed to decolonization in the context of settler colonialism and larger colonial discourses can also provide the content and form for transformative knowledge production. What can a strategic harnessing of traditional knowledge of Micronesian seafaring and Dakota river and skyways offer efforts to decolonize and produce new forms of knowledge? In what follows, I give a sense of this yearning. In section II, I offer a reading of a painting of a canoe, not by a Dakota but by an Ojibwe artist, and, perhaps just as sacrilegiously, from the vantage point of

Micronesian seafaring culture and technology. In section III, I'll offer a description of what we might call a transindigenous community-based research and teaching program centered on juxtaposing Dakota and displaced Micronesian communities in rural west Minnesota. In the fourth and final section, I offer a theoretical and historical context for the need for such a transindigenous theory and practice, and then conclude by resituating Micronesian seafaring in the larger universe of cultural, political, and analytic possibilities.

II. On Scrolls

Elizabeth LaPensée's painting of an Anishinabe *wiigwaas jiimaan* (birchbark canoe) appears to be free floating in outer space, but it's not, or at least not in any way that obscures indigenous grounding in specific localities, even if the flow might turn out to be cosmological, as indigenous skyways through winds, clouds, and stars might be classified. For example, titled *On Scrolls Carried by Canoe*, the immediate reference to birchbark scrolls in the painting's name, and the visible material composition of the canoe as birchbark staunchly identify the craft and surrounding environment, and for the import of that environment, the collective identity of the canoe's occupants. Together they gesture to a *deep* Anishinabe cultural history that also has *wide reach*. An artist and media scholar, LaPensée herself is Anishinabe with relations to Bay Mills in northern Michigan.

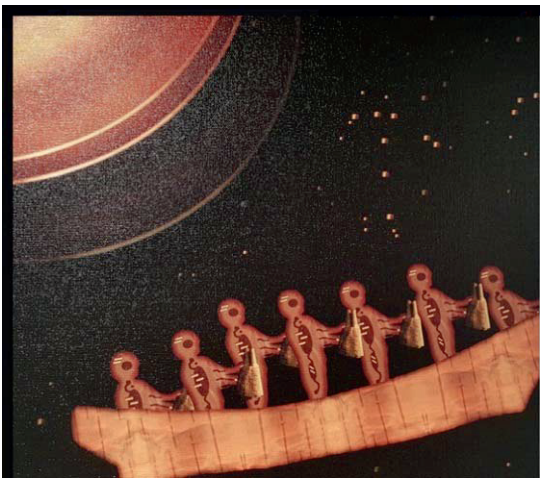

FIGURE 1. **"On Scrolls Carried By Canoe" by Elizabeth LaPensée, with permission.**

Like rock paintings, for Anishinabe and Nishinabe (and other water-borne Algonkian speaking peoples of North American rivers, lakes, and skyways) birchbark scrolls are famous media inscriptions and texts. Indeed, they constitute entire archives. Libraries of historical and spiritual mobility, these texts also signify deep cultural identity as told through prophecy, and as such, theirs is a history and a future of travel by water through land, to and from the skyworld. If they stopped it was in places where, as prophesied, "food grows on water" (Benton-Benai 1988, 89). Where I work in the present-day state of Minnesota, homeland of Dakota people (I'll return and dwell with them later), water prevails: state-boosters refer to it as the "Land of Ten Thousand Lakes," and still the best descriptor of the larger (Great Lakes) terrain of which Minnesota is a part, that I have come upon, is that it is that kind of land "where to travel at all was to travel by water" (Roberts and Shackleton 1983, cited in Neuzil and Sims 2016, 61).

Here and there, the reach of ancient Anishinabe (and Dakota) prophetic and geographic mobility is also historical and discursive: in *Books and Islands in Ojibwe Country*, a canoe journey memoir through waterways in Northern Minnesota and Canada, Louise Erdrich (2003) asserts that the people who wrote on wiigwaas scrolls (and painted on rocks) weren't the ancestors of modern Ojibwe but *the* modern Ojibwe. Here she pushes the date of modernity in Indian country back thousands of years to the beginning, by explicitly defining indigeneity in terms of cultural innovation and change through the technology and instrumentation of inscription upon birchbark (and rocks). Thus, we might say that both the technology of writing on birchbark materiality and the stories that are carried on technologies of mobility called birchbark canoes cover a lot of ground, geographically, temporally, and discursively speaking. As such, both birchbark and the canoes out of which they are made have great carrying capacity for Ojibwe indigeneity. What I love most about this painting is how the particular mix of depth and reach and political self-determination that is expressive in the cultural specificity of Ojibwe birchbark indigeneity does not foreclose on other interpretive and political possibilities in meaning. And so, as one also from indigenous water country with remarkable travel habits that constitute nativeness, I take up the invite.

To add value to what we might now refer to as the birch canoe of Anishinabe indigeneity, I jaunt momentarily to the Marshall Islands, and then from there, to the Central Carolines. Marshall Islanders refer to their islands as *aelon* [*ai-lahng*], which sounds as if they can't pronounce the English word "island" properly, except aelon is an indigenous Marshallese word with meanings of even greater cultural alterity to the tropes of isolation, remoteness, and insularity about which the Euro-American term "island" has come to signify in racist and essentialist colonial and postcolonial discourses about Pacific Islandness (Diaz

2015). *Ae* means "currents," and *lang* means "sky" (Ahlgren 2016). But Aelon's composite materiality of fluidity and infinite vastness also connotes the specificity and indispensability of site locality, indeed of resolute foundationality, that conditions the surrounding environment and informs its inhabitants' sense of self. Much as how sea and currents pound and shape land into existence, land's contours in turn give distinct form to water, winds, rain, and air. This stuff is quite literally deep: the term aelon actually includes submarine flow down to the seafloor, but especially as currents bend and wend around the particular contours of individual and chains of atolls. Land and water shape each other in specific ways. From seafloor to the stars is how we might better understand indigenous Marshallese notions of islandness and indigenous belongings to it. And island and islanderness in relation to seafaring: by all accounts Marshallese navigators were/are particularly adept at a form of reckoning position at sea by reading distinct swells as they bend and inflect around specific island forms. All island navigators use the positions of rising and setting stars, the sun, cloud formations, colors of the water, and the behavior and itineraries of sea and winged creatures endogenous to specific islands to discern location and positionality at sea (Lewis 1972), but the Marshallese were/are masters of swell reading and feeling, swells and currents that span the sea floor to the celestial skies and all things in between (Genz et al. 2009). Such is an island in Marshallese discourse. For the moment let's catch a ride from Marshallese waves to Carolinian skies.

In the Central Caroline islands are to be found the two most famous of atolls in seafaring lore: Polowat and Satawal (Gladwin 1970; Brower 1983).

FIGURE 2. **Paafu. Shells that mark rising and setting points of stars for directional purposes. By Author.**

Navigators from across the Central Carolines use a system called *paafu* that looks to the rising or setting points of stars and constellations to determine

the relationality between one's position and the direction of other marks. It is the cartographic instrument called paafu, within the framework of indigenously grounded mobilities like the Marshallese aelon, that enables me to provide value-added reading of LaPensée's Ojibwe canoe. Actually, that reading was first published last fall, but in a venue of dubious academic respectability: Facebook, and in an exchange with students enrolled in my Native Canoe Cultures of Oceania and the Great Lakes, though not that I'm in the habit of Facebook friending current students. In any case, in class we had just covered how paafu worked, and had been studying Anishinabe, and Dakota sky knowledge (Gawboy and Morton 2014; Goodman 1992; Gould and Rock 2016), when Jacob posted the image and Chrissy inquired about it:

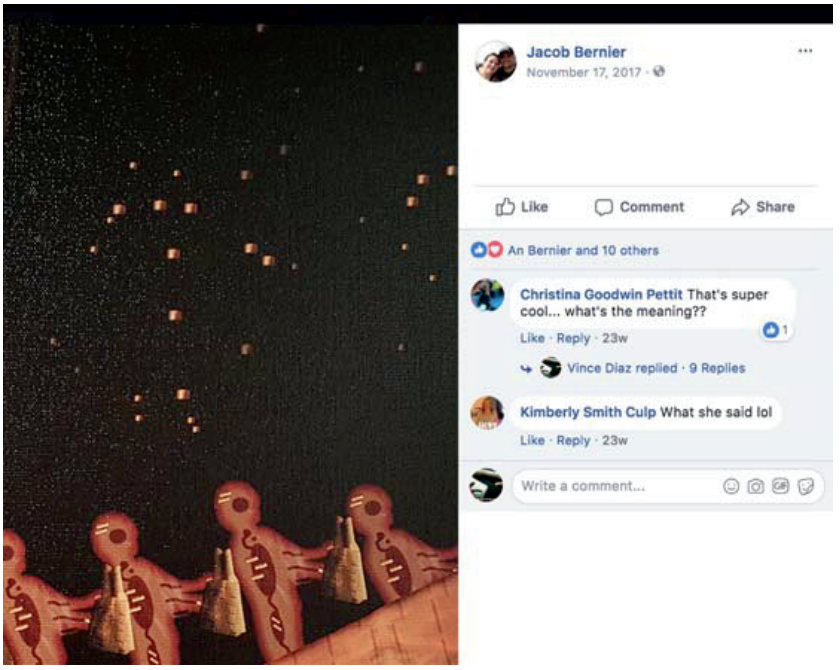

FIGURE 3. **Screen Shot 1, from author's Facebook page, November 17, 2017.**

FIGURE 4. **Screen Shot 2 from author's Facebook page, November 17, 2017.**

In the ensuing exchange, which yields information about where Jacob saw the painting, Chrissy observes that the canoe is missing the *amara* or "sail" (in Polowatese), in response to which Jacob quickly corrects her ("it is a birchbark"), and to which she just as quickly replies, "Oh, I know, but with an amara and *tam* (outrigger pontoon) it could be Micronesian!" And that's all I needed.

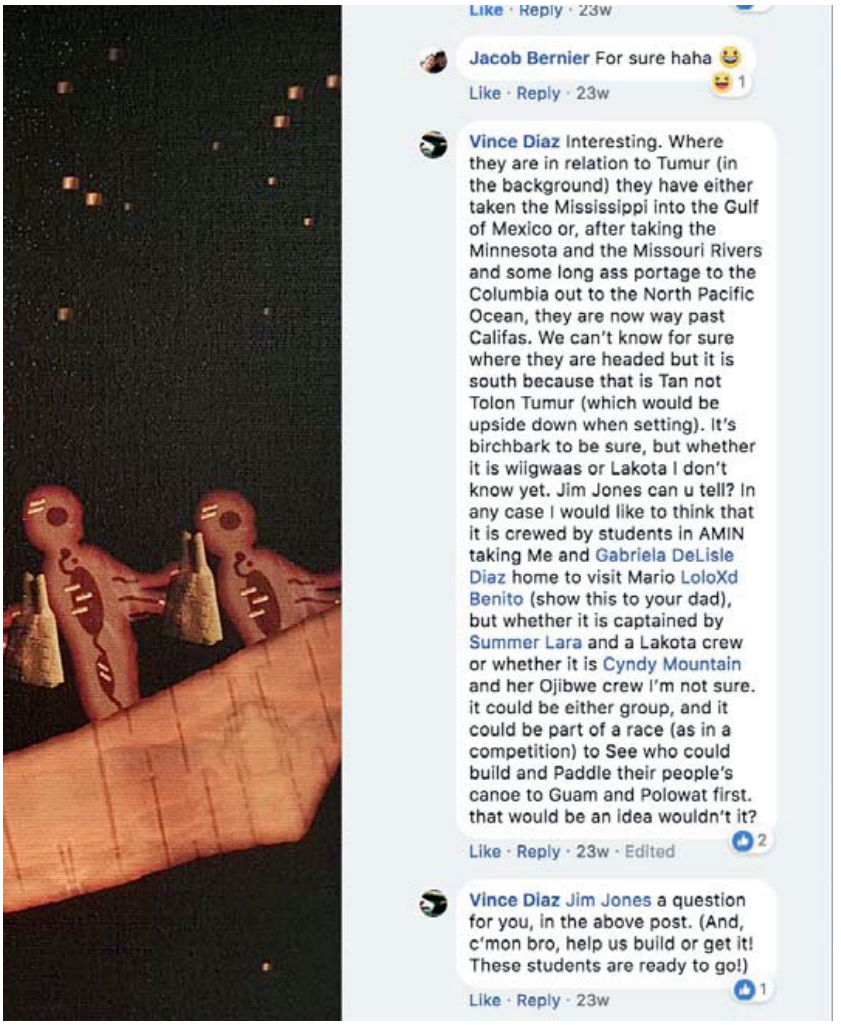

FIGURE 5. **Screen Shot 3 from author's Facebook page, November 17, 2017.**

Let me explain. For me, at least, the constellation that is visible behind the second passenger on the right (best visible in Figure 1) looks like what Polowatese call *Tumur* (that is part of Scorpio's tail), and in a position that appears to be rising in what the west calls the "eastern" horizon. Set precisely against Tumur's "look" just so, as would be viewed from Polowat, the canoe appears to be heading south (or heading north, from the south). This would mean, as an Anishinaabe

canoe, it would be somewhere in the Gulf of Mexico via a southern trek through the Mississippi River. Or it could be in the Pacific Ocean, somewhere in the latitude between Central and South America but anywhere, really, in the interior of the Pacific Ocean. In either case, the initial trek from the Great Lakes could have been through the Mississippi (if to the Gulf), or through the Minnesota and/or the Missouri Rivers with portages to the Columbia Rivers (if westward, to the Pacific Ocean). This is how I grounded the flight of my own imagination. While a flight of fancy,[2] the larger point of my contribution to the Facebook thread was that Micronesian seafaring also offers additional mileage to Anishinabe, and, as we shall see in the next section, Dakota, cultural and geographic itineraries. This indigenously added value anchors the third part of this article.

III. Back to the Future Between Faichuuk and Miní Sóta Makhóčhe

FIGURE 6. **Oceanic artifacts on iconic American Indian Pendleton blanket. By author.**

FIGURE 7. **Iconic American Indian artifacts on Fijian tapa bark cloth. By author.**

The bid to join Anishinabe and Pacific indigeneity in the skyworld through canoes is not some postmodern flight of fancy, is not simply a case of anything-goes-fluidity. It is most certainly not a neoliberal token for a free ride or pass at the expense of indigenous integrity and sovereignty. Instead it expresses a contemporary, very serious, very rigorous, bid to strategically harness traditional knowledge of Micronesian seafaring knowledge with TEK of river

and skyways from Dakota country for what working together can do for two distinct groups of relatively and differentially displaced indigenous peoples, each in their own ways trying to decolonize. What follows in fact builds off of antecedents in canoe work involving Central Carolinians and Chamorros in Guam when I taught at the University of Guam in the 1990s (Diaz 1994, 2002), and Pacific Islanders and Anishinabe communities in Native Great Lakes region, when I taught at the University of Michigan and University of Illinois in the 2000s (Diaz 2013). The current project involves a long-term program of cultural revitalization of canoe voyaging and knowledge of land, water, and skyways in the Caroline islands and in Dakota homelands in rural, western Minnesota.

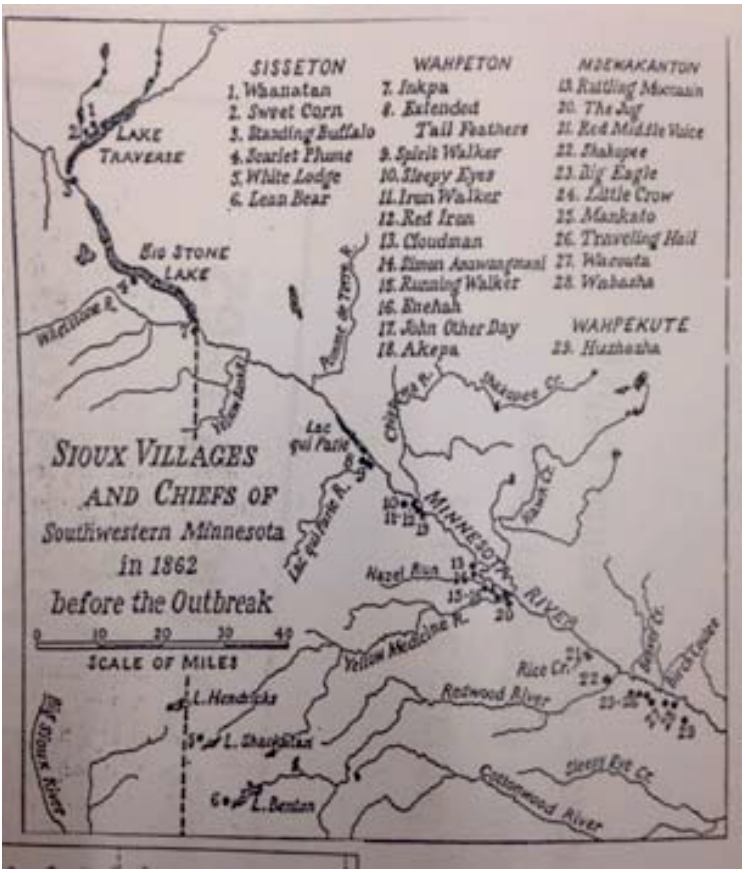

FIGURE 8. **Map of "Sioux Villages and Chiefs of Southwest Minnesota in 1862." With permission from the Minnesota Historical Society.**

The project is many things: a mapping project (that also involves virtual and augmented reality technology), and an ethnography. I like to think of it as understanding—and making—history by way of the particular ways that we move forward with other similarly motivated and propelled Natives. Mostly, I like to think of it as an act of decolonization, of indigenous resurgence (Alfred and Corntassel 2005; Aikau, Goodyear-Kaʻōpua, and Silva 2016; Corntassel 2012; Coulthard and Simpson 2016; Dhillon 2018; Diaz 2015; Simpson 2011; Teaiwa 1997) through projects of cultural revitalization and reclamation that feature radical indigenous relationalities between human, other-than-human, and nature, in multiple and competing scales (Todd 2017; Whyte 2018; Goeman 2013; Yazzie and Baldy 2018).

More specifically, the project is spawned by the efforts of a group of displaced Micronesians in rural southwest Minnesota who basically want to continue to be Micronesian in what they think is modern America by revitalizing outrigger canoe building and sailing using traditional knowledge from their kinship relations in the Central Carolines. The hitch is hitching the project to similarly conceived and staked efforts by the real home team: Dakota communities. And, as we are learning to negotiate and navigate together, we are also learning how Dakota, too, have a long and deep history and tradition of movement and expression through profound instrumentalized interconnectivity between self and environment that refuses colonial compartmentalization and binary logics. What is quickly developing, hence, is a partnership to practice indigenous Micronesian cultural traditions in Dakota homelands, waters, and skyways without replicating the sins of settler colonial dispossession and disenfranchisement. What we are beginning to learn is just how necessary it is to *include good and generative relations with Dakota as a precondition for being traditionally Micronesian*.

In the past decade a Chuukese community of almost 700 people has sprung up in rural, southwest Minnesota plains. Sourced from a single individual who initially wanted only to visit his Peace Corp worker brother who had returned to his own hometown in Milan, Minnesota, a population soon exploded in that town alone to over 400 today. While the number itself is small, the wave of migrants from the state of Chuuk in the Federated States of Micronesia in the Carolines is really a deluge in that Chuukese now comprise three-quarters of the town's population, whose remaining townsfolk consist primarily of elder folks.

Milan, Minnesota, is one of those rural towns founded by Norwegian and Scandinavian settlers in the mid-nineteenth century.

It is not for nothing that Minnesota's professional football team, which had its fair share of Polynesian players in its past rosters, is called the Vikings, and

FIGURES 9–11. **Polowat Navigator, Mario Benito in downtown Milan Town, Minnesota, October 2017. By author.**

FIGURE 12. **Town Mural, Milan, Minnesota. October 2017. By author.**
FIGURE 13. **Arv Hus Museum, downtown Milan, Minnesota. October 2017. By author.**

FIGURE 14. **Replica Viking boat by Sons of Norway, Milan Fourth of July Parade, July 2016. Photograph by Gabriel Elias.**

Milan's residents, not without basis, boast of being the Norwegian-American capital of Minnesota, if not of America's heartland.

In its annual fourth of July parade down the single block of main street, the perennial float entry is a replica Viking ship built by the state's civic organization, the Sons of Norway. In the summer of 2016, the number of floats doubled.

FIGURE 15. **Micronesian *waa herak*/outrigger canoe Milan, Fourth of July Parade, July 2016. Photograph by Gabriel Elias.**

That's my outrigger sailing canoe, built in Guam but Polowatese in design and operation.

The Chuukese of Milan have also begun to refer to themselves as the Milanesians. Milanesia is a play on the town's name and the standard orientalist taxonomy of Oceania into the more familiar divisions of Polynesia, Melanesia, and Micronesia. Unlike the conventions, this one is self-imposed and deliberate.

FIGURE 16. **Collage, Milanesian Café, Milan, Minnesota, October 2017: Photographs by author.**

In their recent history here, the Milanesians have traded a self-subsistent lifestyle of fishing and harvesting back in the Chuuk lagoon for small town life of modest wage earning. The majority of the men work for the Jenni-O Turkey processing plant in the next town, while women hold menial jobs and work as volunteer assistants for the local government and two churches in Milan and the surrounding towns. It is a young demographic; its leaders are in their late thirties and early forties, though there are about a dozen elders.[3]

On the whole, rural southwest Minnesota towns are in economic decline. Milan is the sole exception, and this on account of the still-growing

population of Chuukese. If for this reason Milan town stands out in the region, the Milanesians also stand in sharp contrast to the profile and reputation of other displaced Micronesian, especially Chuukese, communities in Guam, Hawai'i, and the US Pacific west coast (California, Oregon, and Washington). The Chuukese of Milan have a relatively good reputation, and tensions with neighbors are relatively minor. There have been no deaths from driving under the influence, stabbings, robberies, the tale of the tape for which Chuukese in the diaspora are stereotypically stigmatized. The biggest difference stems from the fact that most of the Chuukese come from a single island—Romanum—in the Faichuuk region of the Chuuk Lagoon, which is itself a particularly complex sea of island hubs that is also politically associated with three "outlying" groups of atolls beyond the Chuuk lagoon, of which Polowat is a part.

FIGURE 17. **Juxtapositions of 3 Maps: (a) Romanum Island (lower left hand), emplaced in (b) Chuuk Lagoon (upper right hand), emplaced in the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM). Map of Chuuk reproduced with permission from Center for Pacific Islands Studies, University of Hawai'i. Map of Romanum screen shot from Google Earth.**

One particularly auspicious sign in the story of lagoon people displaced in rural west Minnesota—as if written in the stars—is that the leaders of this community turn out to have traditional "fictive kinship" ties to Polowat atoll beyond the lagoon. Particularly remarkable is that their kinship ties are to the same clan and canoehouse and navigational school into which I myself had been adopted and trained, thereby making all of us kin. That canoe house and clan may now include, in its traditional orbits, housing and resources in rural west Minnesota as it does in the Chuuk Lagoon.

Milan is a very small town with many low rent bungalows, and a small one and a half block downtown. It is also surrounded by corn and soy fields, and these, by prairie. In this sense it is not unlike the island of Romanum in the Chuuk lagoon, in the surrounding Micronesian seas.

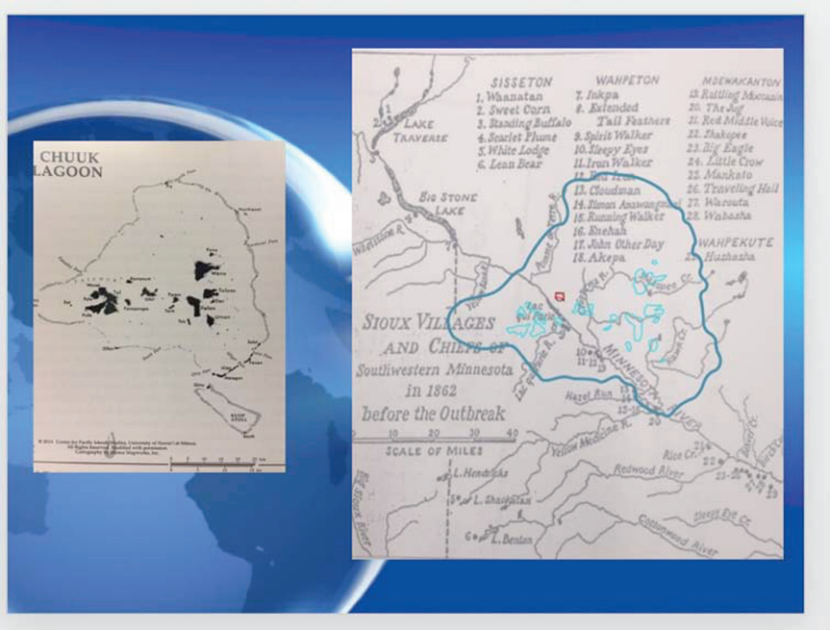

FIGURE 18. **Cartographic overlays of Chuuk Lagoon upon 1862 map of Yellow Medicine. Produced at the Architecture as Catalyst-Cosmopolitan Design Workshop: Rural Futures, by graduate architecture students, School of Architecture, College of Design, University of Minnesota Twin Cities (UMN-TC), Spring Semester 2018. With permission from Prof. Virajita Singh, College of Design, UMN-TC. Map of Sioux Villages reproduced with permission from the Minnesota Historical Society.**

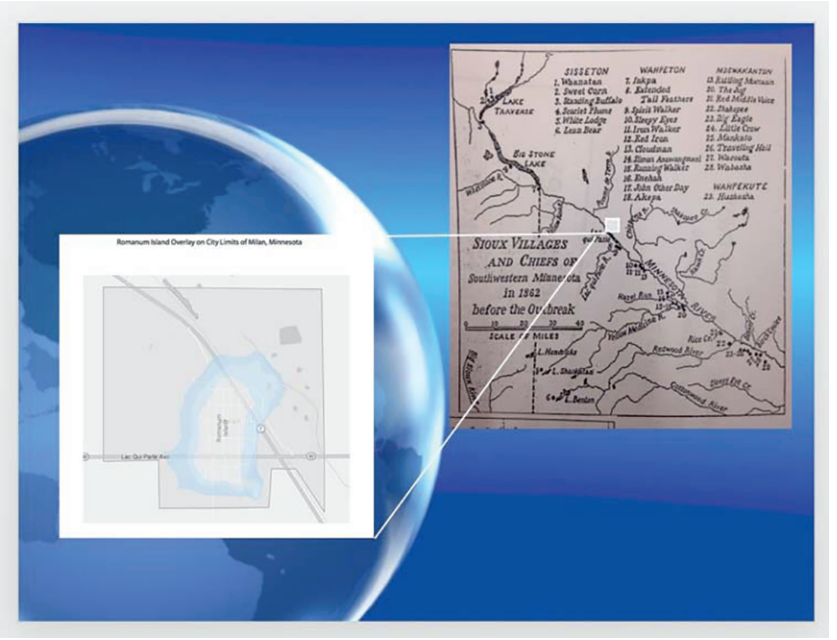

FIGURE 19. **Romanum island emplaced in location of present-day Milan as seen in 1862 "Sioux" Map. By Students in Catalyst Workshop 2018. Map of Sioux Villages reproduced with permission from the Minnesota Historical Society.**

Indeed, the Milanesians often say being in Milan reminds them of being back home.

But rural west Minnesota is still Miní Sóta Makhóčhe (Westermann and White 2012), the traditional homelands of the Dakhóta Oyáte, who still hold fiercely to that fact, while the larger region itself is better understood as the eastern edges of the Great Plains of Oceti Ŝakowiŋ, the Seven Councils of Fire, as the different branches that comprise the Great "Sioux" nation call themselves, as they range across North and South Dakota (once having included Wisconsin, Iowa, and Illinois) and into deep reaches of Northern Plains Canada. This was and continues to be the traditional range of the Oceti Ŝakowiŋ, but as it has been occupied by military and settler colonialism (Waziyatawin 2006, 2008).

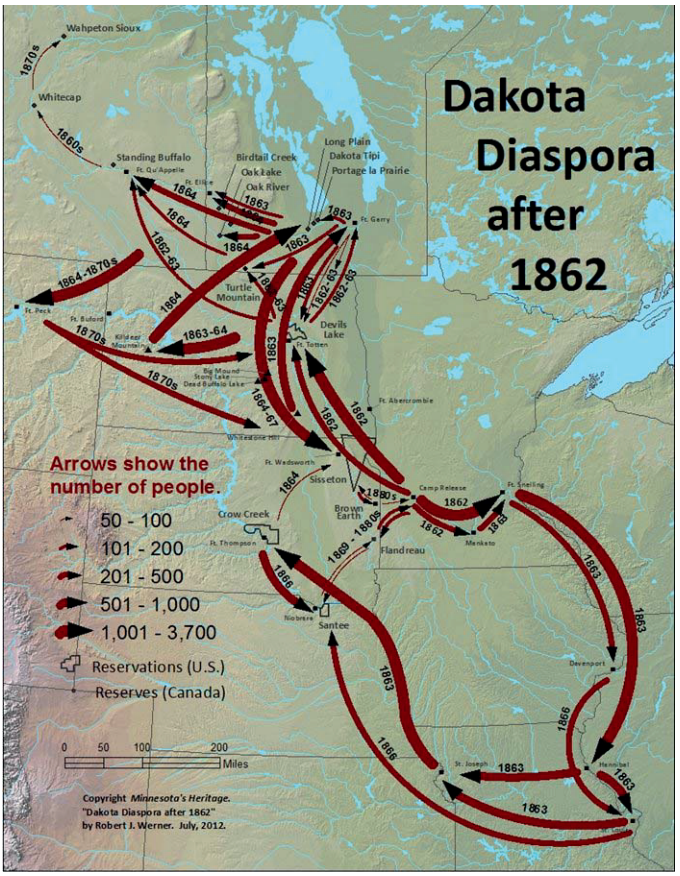

FIGURE 20. **Dakota Diaspora 1862–1870. Image use courtesy of Robert Werner.**

Since the 1860s, after bloody warfare and the start of a genocidal campaign of removal, most Dakota had been rounded up and removed from the state in the Dakota version of the Trail of Tears. But in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Dakota had begun to return and now comprise four state-recognized and other nonrecognized tribal communities. The two closest to Milan are the Upper and Lower Sioux reservations, and they still refer to the region in which Milan is located as Petihutazizi Kaʻpi Makhóčhe "(Where They Dig for) Yellow Medicine." The "Upper" and "Lower" Sioux are so named for their location up and down the Minnesota River.

In 2016 Milanesians expressed to me a desire to build their own outrigger canoes and learn the fundamentals of Carolinian voyaging. As a migrant community, their preferred language is still their Romanum (aka Ulalu) dialect, but the leaders fear acculturation. Though they have a strong sense of their own island's traditions, and prefer to speak in their language, they feel that seafaring in particular would give them a stronger basis on which to build and ensure their future as Chuukese.

Made For The Ocean, Outrigger Canoe Takes On The Wind-Swept Waters Of Lac Qui Parle Lake On The Prairie

September 7, 2016 Tom Cherveny Outdoors

TOM CHERVENY | TRIBUNE

Sepestian Mateus, Singeru Elias, Vicente Diaz, and Gabriel Elias return after easily managing the waves and winds on Lac qui Parle Lake on September 3

MILAN – Gusty winds bore down the length of Lac qui Parle Lake, chasing up waves like a whitewater run on a wild river.

FIGURE 21. **Paddling at Lac Qui Parle, Minnesota, September 2017. By Tom Cherveny, with permission.**

And so we put the canoe in the water, in Milan, the Lac Qui Parle, which is fed by the Minnesota River, but not before we formally sought permission and acknowledged being on Dakota lands, waters, and skyways.

FIGURES 22 AND 23. **Dakota Language professor at the University of Minnesota Twin Cities, Çaŋte Máza (Neil McKay), greets the Milanesians and the *waa* at the Bdote, the sacred confluence of the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers, in the vicinity of present-day Fort Snelling. Photos courtesy of Charissa Blue-Downs.**

In spring 2017 we had a soft launch at the Bdote, the sacred confluence of the Minnesota and the Mississippi rivers, and then a more formal launch as part of the founding of my department's Native Canoe Program, at the Mississippi River, on the east bank of the river on campus.

FIGURE 24. **Launching of the Native Canoe Program, Department of American Indian Studies, University of Minnesota (UMN), at East (Mississippi) River Flats, UMN East River Bank. October 2017. Photograph collage by author.**

At both places we were hosted by Dakota leaders and community people who offered prayer, welcome, and gratitude for reaching out to them. At both places they also taught us about what Dakota call *bdote,* "confluences of rivers," but also of domains, for example, between this temporal world and the sky, not unlike the Marshallese idea of aelon. We learned quickly of one bdote of remarkable significance: where the Mississippi and the Minnesota Rivers converge. In "eastern" Dakota cosmological cartographic mapping of Dakota peoplehood, this is *the* most sacred bdote, the portal, from which Dakota themselves sprung from the prior world into this temporal realm and through which they return to the afterlife in the *Woniya Wakan Tanka*, the "breath of the Great Mystery," as the sky world is known (Goodman 1992, 1). As such, the bdote expresses the Dakota concept of the *Kapemni,* that is, that what is found in the skyworld reflects all that transpires on land and vice versa (17).

Imaged as a "twist" or spiral as to illustrate perfect symmetry between what's above and what's below, Kapemni also draws cosmic energy from the temporal and spiritual realms of past/present/and future intersectionality to a meeting point through which lives and meaning transit. The Bdote is thus the most sacred site of Dakota genesis and departure. But in the nineteenth century, US militarized settler colonialism built at the Bdote the notorious Fort Snelling. Literally overseeing the Bdote, Fort Snelling served as a concentration camp to and from which Dakota after the War of 1862 were rounded up and imprisoned in a particularly brutal winter, and then exiled from the state. For this, the sacred site of Dakota genesis and portage also became the horrific site of Dakota genocide, as Dakota historian and activist, Waziyatawin, explains in *What Does Justice Look Like? The Struggle for Liberation in Dakota Homeland* (Waziyatawin 2008, 103). In this important manifesto, Waziyatawin spells out the moral imperative in seeing Fort Snelling as an icon of nothing less than an ongoing history of Dakota genocide, whose location at the Bdote requires nothing short of tearing it down as a prerequisite for honoring Dakota ancestors and sacred landscape, beginning with those who were incarcerated there in the early 1860s and from whence they were exiled. Launching our canoe at that site came with prayers and pledges to ensure that the process of becoming good Micronesian navigators in Minnesota will not do anything that contributes to this legacy of violent erasure.

The initial quest to build and sail traditional Carolinian canoes in Milan is now articulated to an ongoing community development plan for sustainability and resilience. Besides building and sailing canoes, we are also learning the fundamentals of Carolinian navigation. Last fall, for the aforementioned course, I brought a *pwo* or traditional master navigator from Polowat, Mario Benito, to coteach and codesign the classes and projects on campus and in the Milan community. At Milan we even did *paafu*, opening up the "mat" of knowledge of the rising and setting stars as used in Polowat.

Figure 25. **Collage of Polowatese pwo navigator, Mario Benito, conducting paafu with *Re Romanum* (people of Romanum) inside the Milanesian Café, Milan, Minnesota. October 24, 2017. The event was cosponsored by the Milanesian community and the Milan Listening House project, in conjunction with the ArtPlace and the Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership. Photographs by author.**

On campus the course met at the river on weekends, but also went out and visited and paddled with Anishinabe and Dakota communities across the state.

FIGURE 26. **Paddling at Milan. Photograph courtesy of Tom Cherveny.**

FIGURE 27. **Canoe Kin: a Carolinian *waa* and a Dakota *wata* enjoy a break. Community paddle at the Lower Sioux Indian Community. Photo by Jake Bernier, with permission.**

This work also includes a virtual and augmented reality component, begun in Illinois, but that is another story for another time.

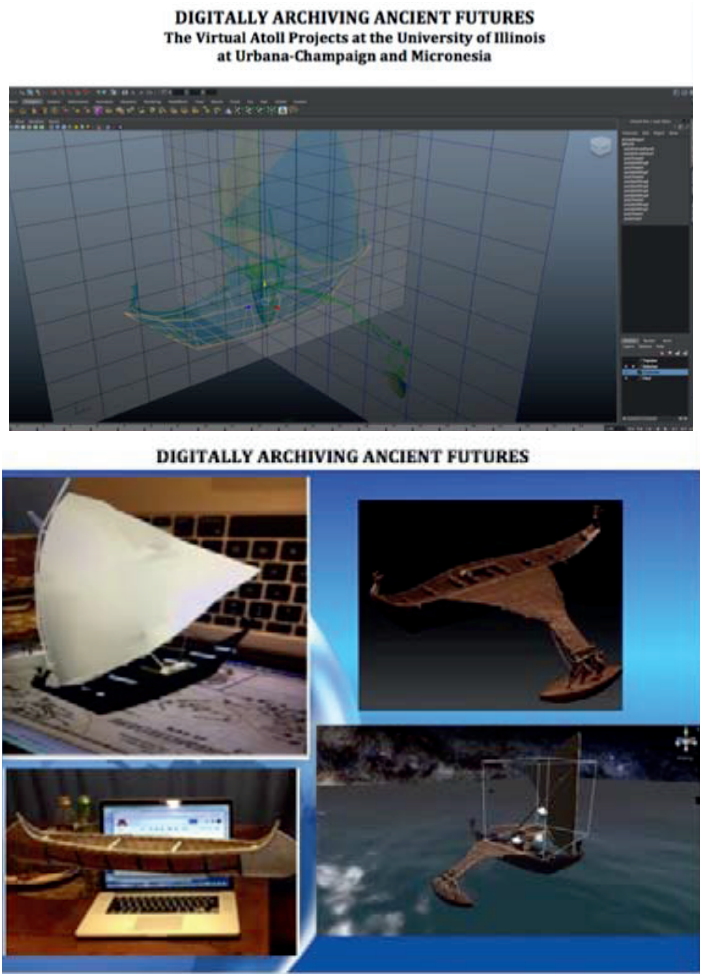

Figure 28. **Screen shot of 3D Waa, "Digitally Archiving Ancient Futures" Project, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Graphic engineering by Dani Pavic, Fall 2014. Photograph by author.**
Figure 29. **Samples of virtual and augmented waa and wiigwaas jiimaan/ Birchbark Canoe, "The Canoe Virtual Project," University of Minnesota Twin Cities, Spring 2018. Funded by a Liberal Arts Technologies and Innovation Services (LATIS) Technology Innovation Grant, College of Liberal Arts, UMN-TC, with generous technical support by the Interactive Visualization Lab (IV/Lab) under the direction of Prof. Dan Keefe, Department of Computer Engineering and Sciences, UMN-TC. Photographs by author.**

These multisited, community-engaged pedagogy and research activities resonate well within these communities since the Dakota and Anishinabe have been reviving birch and dugout canoes.


Development of an Sustainable and Resilient Community for Chuukese people in Milan MN

Angechu In the Chuukese Language this means "Working together" Micronesian People of Milan

Purpose

To provide administrative oversight to better disperse public services to the blended cultures in Milan Minnesota. Angechu will develop a strategy that advocates for Milan's multiple cultures, their arts community and main street businesses to develop a more resilient community. Angechu's vision is to better educate and coordinate the public and private services which surrounds the entire population of the Milan area. Angechu understands that to have a vibrant rural community there must be solid plans in place to serve the community members' with stable and supportive life styles along with filling the total populations recreational
annual community forums to track
along with providing a more stable,
while getting fresh input from the p

There is no question that Milan's
art of the Scandinavian community
when almost 100% of the citizens o
80 classes yearly to promote the Sc
the population of Milan has greatly
148 were Micronesian people. Toda
around 350 living in the surroundin
Milan are Pacifica Islanders from Mi

PEOPLES OF THE WATERS:
Bridging Communities with Traditional Watercraft and Marine Arts

17 JANUARY 2018

This project proposes to bring together individuals from three distinct cultural and historical communities in Minnesota's Southwest region – Milan's Scandinavian Americans, it's new residents from the Pacific Island nation of the Federated States of Micronesia, and members of the nearby Upper Sioux Dakota community -- through the building of traditional watercraft and other arts associated with boats

nable community
building through each's

on as the plains, to forge
ilding traditional boats
skills of fine carving,
lues, technology,
earning, cultural values
le of water travel and
three communities,

PROJECT SUMMARY

Project Title: The Canoe Virtual: Fusing Advanced Visualization Technology (AVT) and Traditional Environmental Knowledge (TEK) for Advancing Academic Innovation.

AMOUNT REQUESTED: $26,779
PRIMARY PROPOSER: Vicente M. Diaz

PROJECT ABSTRACT: This project proposes to build a module that employs specific forms of Advanced Visualization Technologies (AVT) to facilitate the teaching and learning of specific cultural skill sets that are associated with Indigenous watercraft and water-related traditional knowledge from the Pacific Islands and Great Lakes region. More specifically, to be carried out in conjunction with a Fall 2017 offering of AMIN 3312 Indigenous Environmental Issues and Ecological Perspectives, which centers Traditional Environmental Knowledge (TEK), this project calls for data capture of activities for Virtual Reality (VR) simulation and game design of two of the course's components, namely 1) the building of a traditional birch bark canoe, and 2) the teaching and learning of how to "shunt" a Pacific islands outrigger sailing canoe, along with the "hot mapping" of a third component that is already in Augmented Reality (AR) form. Through work in these three components, components that are separate but thematically and pedagogically inseparable in an already innovative course that advances the study of indigeneity and the environment through comparative and global connections as well as through hands-on, experiential practices, the module also offers a model of value-added academic innovation in just how it conceptualizes the use of advanced digital technology in relation to traditional forms of indigenous knowledge and technology. That relation relies on an eye for what can happen when the powers of advanced visualization technology for knowledge purposes fuse with the powers of indigenous knowledge technologies for advancement purposes. What distinguishes this project from others that propose to use new digital technology to enhance their content is the mutually informing and mutually beneficial relationship -- the cutting both ways -- that the new technology will have with the "old" indigenous technology. It is in this way that we are

FIGURE 30. **Community Engagement Grants: "People of the Waters/Angechu Master Plan," with support from the University of Minnesota Extension Southwest Regional Sustainable Development Partnership. Also the aforementioned (see Fig. 29) "Canoe Virtual" Project. By author.**

Back in Milan, the goal of building canoes and learning navigation quickly became folded into a community-driven process, of developing a master plan for economic, social, and cultural development, the latter of which is now taking the form of a project that plans to create an intercommunity team to build an outrigger canoe, a Dakota dug out, and a Viking boat. [Not to be underestimated for its indigenous potential . . . Sami say they taught woodwork to Vikings.]

Another project under development involves working with the Lower Sioux Dakota community's Recreation Program to build a canoe launch and traditional structure in their community on the Minnesota River. That idea, in conjunction with the holding of the paafu lesson at the Milanesian Café, convinced us to proceed more diligently with a plan to build a traditional *utt* or "canoe

house" in Milan. In the spring semester of 2018, we collaborated with colleagues and graduate students at the University of Minnesota's College of Design's annual Catalyst Workshop, where students are given a particular design challenge to research and develop in one week. Part of this year's challenge was to "design a traditional Micronesian Canoe House that recognizes its location on Dakota Homelands and doesn't replicate the sins of settler colonialism."

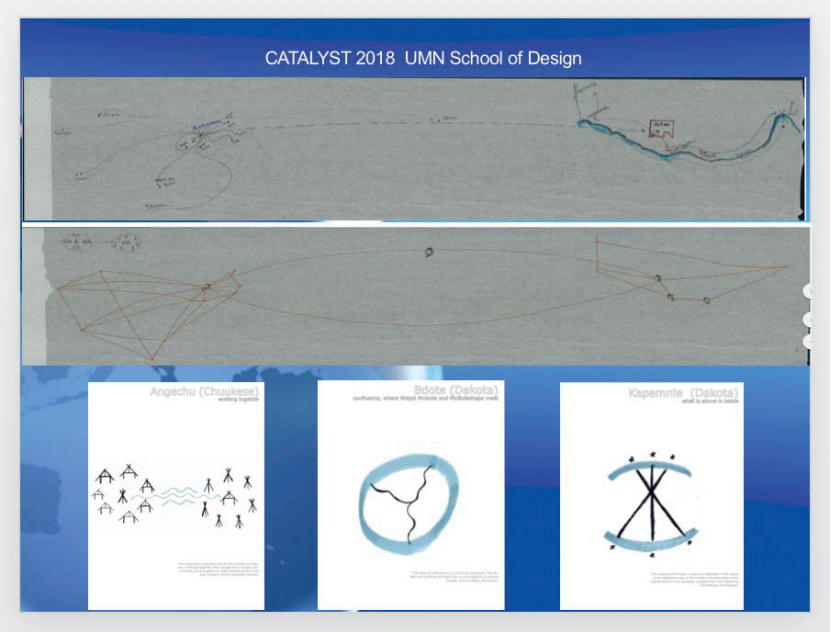

FIGURE 31. **Design ideas that juxtapose Micronesian and Dakota spatial and temporal relationships, three planes. Produced at the Architecture as Catalyst-Cosmopolitan Design Workshop: Rural Futures, by graduate architecture and landscape architecture students, School of Architecture, College of Design, University of Minnesota Twin Cities, Spring Semester 2018. With permission from Prof. Virajita Singh, College of Design, UMN-TC.**

We are currently consolidating these projects and activities into a single, multifaceted, multisited, fully and multisensoried program in the community.

Currently we are in formal consultation phases with the Upper and Lower Sioux tribal councils for a project that we hope will expand the courses and activities to include comparative indigenous astronomy, ecology, oral history

(involving water ceremonies for men and women), and even a "mixed reality" virtual reality studio and laboratory component, using TEK from this region and from Micronesia. Imagine a course of community-based and engaged study in which, in this kind of Native-to-Native-to-Settler relations, the Milanesians are able to learn the "seas" of their homeland and their new homes, and all the prerequisite ecological and cultural knowledge necessary to locate—to emplace—oneself properly in time/space in indigenous terms. Imagine, a course of action, learning, and research in which, by virtue and method of combined Carolinian local seafaring and Dakota rivers and plains knowledge, the Milanesians also learn Dakota land, water, and skyways and then proceed in time to backtrack to home waters and skies by similarly engaging in such activities with indigenous communities along the way. The backtracking is literal: at some point in the near future they literally return home and then plot the star and sea course with the amassed knowledge of such local lands and seas such as how it would have been carried out traditionally, as a voyage from Romanum to Yellow Medicine might be so imagined and carried out by tracking the shifting variable and looks and feels of each leg along the way. The return to Dakota lands would be a kind of homecoming: Micronesians return "home" to Yellow Medicine, Dakota possibly adding new cultural materiality from elsewhere with which to reflect or mirror kinship relations in their own renewed relationship to their sky world. For Micronesians displaced in Dakota lands and waters, it is the first and necessary leg in a long journey back to Chuukese futures. Beginning by working at both ends of what we might call a transindigenous memory map is key, because traditional seafaring works at both ends: shoving off from local waters and skies and knowing where one is by incrementally building—through distinct "legs" of a journey, on knowledge of the "local" leg—in order to arrive at the final destination; for a journey of the largest distance is actually a series of steps or legs involving the "working" of local ecological knowledge to its interphase with eco-material presented in and from the next leg of a journey. A substantive, instrumentalized version of an old adage that a journey of a thousand miles begins with one step, traditional voyaging works by establishing a baseline of knowledge from the specificities of the first leg in order lay both a course and the units of analyses by which to take the next leg, and so forth. Here, the local seas surrounding the island of origin and the island of destination are crucial bookends, and they need to be incrementally connected through the interconnectedness of the serial and constitutive legs of the journey. The journey here crosses many indigenous homes and traditions, and so must involve all of them as a precondition for carrying out a successful "Micronesian" voyage. Technically these seas are cross-checked against a third reference island in a system, in the Central Carolines, called *etak* or moving islands (Diaz 2015), whose course is charted through legs along a star path. It is precisely the ecological

knowledge of the journey's most important leg—the first leg, as measured from the moment the canoe shoves off and steers in the direction of the rising or setting constellation that mark the location of the destination island, until the point where the origin island can no longer be seen, as it recedes from view—that becomes the baseline data set for subsequent legs. The multiple and shifting variables that must be assessed and calculated in this first leg at "sea"—not in the ocean—but at sea—include the rate of speed as measured by the wake or displacement of water on the bow or off the outrigger pontoon, strengths and direction of currents, which particular waves and swells are at work individually or in tandem or threesome, shifting winds, cloud coverage, mist and rain conditions, etc. It is in this way that good navigators can discern where they are at all points out in the open ocean, that is, by how they work the baseline knowledge established in familiar seas. By knowing the localities of each leg, good navigators can know into whose homes they have entered and are passing through. In this way, as I will elaborate in the next section, geographic reach and cultural depth, or, put in another way, the conditions of routedness and rootedness, are mutually informing. It is in this way that the largest oceans, and the largest islands—Turtle Island, as American Indians tend to call the North American edge of the Pacific—can be traversed indigenously and creatively—without losing sight of site and cultural and ecological specificity.

IV. Toward a Transindigenous Critique

American Indian and Native Pacific culture and identity can, and must, be viewed in more expansive and fluidic terms than are typically accorded "native" traditions by modern discourse, but this expansive and fluidic reach must also not come at the expense of the more familiar depth and specificity for which indigeneity has also been conceptualized and theorized by both indigenous and nonindigenous systems of thought. In this final section I build on the idea, illustrated in the previous two sections, of the need to stake specificity on technical or instrumental as well as on cultural and geographic grounding so as not to aid and abet the sins of settler colonialism and larger forms of colonial discourse that operate through their own forms of disavowing specificity. As unlikely as it might seem, these conditions can be secured through the political and analytical possibilities furnished in the concept of transindigeneity.

The material presented in the first two sections involves indigeneity—the ontological and analytical claims and conditions of nativeness to specific places through the peoples' own conventions of belonging, but especially as forged through the technology of indigenous watercraft and TEK, in the case here, in Anishinabe, Dakota, and Pacific Islander communities. The stakes in such a critically-informed canoe cultural revitalization practice centered on

indigenous TEK, as I have also tried to show, involve the need for indigenous forms of transformative knowledge production committed to decolonization in the context of settler colonialism and larger colonial discourses. The need is as much warranted today as in any other time in the history of the colonization of indigenous lands, waters, skies, bodies, minds, and spirits. In both scholarly and popular discourse about Pacific culture and history in particular, for example, there has been a valorization and reification of the tropes of expansiveness and fluidity, marked by a tendency to play up and favor the moniker "Oceania" over the term "Pacific Islands." In some key ways this turn to expansiveness and fluidity has become problematic for a host of reasons, beginning, in the case of scholarship, with erasure of historical and cultural specificity and tokenism of indigeneity, and, in the case of popular culture, outright ahistorical and romanticized renderings of indigenous culture and history. In both there is a form of neoliberal commodification and cooptation that rises to cultural forms of resource extraction. I'll return to this issue after considering an intellectual moment in the field of Pacific Studies at the end of the twentieth century, whose splash, as it were, was specifically to highlight the need to inject much needed mobility into prevailing discourses about Pacific indigeneity. The person most responsible for that injection—not abuse—was the late Tongan anthropologist-turned-satirist, Epeli Hauʻofa, but there had also been a scatter of writings by an upstart group of younger (at the time!) Pacific scholars, including myself, that had also already begun to push for similar such ways of theorizing the terms of Pacific indigeneity through oceanic, particularly mobile, sensibilities and determinations (Diaz 1989, 1994, 2002; Diaz and Kauanui 2001; Diaz, DeLisle, and Nelson 1997; Marsh 1998; Peter 2000; Salesa 2003; Teaiwa 1995, 1997, 2001, unpublished data; Teaiwa 2005).[4] In this essay I will only address Epeli Hauʻofa's role.

Epeli Hauʻofa is most remembered for his ground-breaking essay "Our Sea of Islands" (Hauʻofa 1994), which famously re-presented the Pacific Islands region in more expansive terms than was habitually accorded and operationalized in colonial, neocolonial, and postcolonial discourse. For so calling attention especially to a deep and ongoing history of islander mobility upon an oceanic world that connected us to, not separated us from, the bigger world, the late Banaban and African American scholar, Teresia Teaiwa (1999), christened Hauʻofa's essay "the most visionary" piece in our field, and indeed, we all gave it a privileged place in our citational practices.

But as if to ground the claims he made in the earlier, more famous essay, his later essay, "Pasts to Remember" (Hauʻofa 2000) was/is decidedly moored in cultural, ecological, and spatial specificity and technology. In "Pasts" Epeli argued for Indigenous Pacific islanders to tell our own histories, to produce narratives that, he asserted, are "our own distinctive creations" (Hauʻofa 2000,

459). In it he explores how Indigenous writers might center Pacific form in the writing of our own pasts, covering three dimensions of form—first, temporality, as in differing and competing conceptions of time; second, spatiality, as in the primacy of one's proper geographic, cultural, and epistemological center of gravity or home; and, third, on technological form. The first two forms might necessitate moving away from linear narrativity that centered European or non-Native temporal presences, an example of which is the imagining of Pacific history but only through the lens of European contact and geographic frames of references.[5] Such an imperialist modality, he argued, delimited the multiplicity and relativity of Pacific truths of the past, and so severed Pacific peoples from their rightful homelands. Of the political effects of reducing Pacific pasts to the binary of prehistory versus history proper, Epeli wrote, "when you view most of a people's past as not history, you shorten very drastically the roots of their culture, or declare their existence doubtful" (Hau'ofa 2000,456). Displaced from narrative, we are also displaced from our beloved lands, waters, and skyways. He elaborates,

> To remove a people from their ancestral, natural surroundings or vice versa, or to destroy their lands with mining, deforestation, bombing, large-scale industrial and urban developments, and the like, is to sever them not only from their traditional sources of livelihood, but also and much more importantly, from their ancestry, their history, their identity, and from their ultimate claim for legitimacy of their existence (469).

Instead of linearity, he argued for circularity; instead of what he called "mainline" history, he suggested the figure of the spiral as drawn from knowledge of local and regional environmental and ecological phenomena, also contained in orality and dance and other expressive genres. In fact, Hau'ofa was all about creativity, about riffing and improvising off deep tradition. In this essay he was bidding us to ground ourselves in our specific traditions of local ecological and environmental knowledge in order to be set free. The operational site of that locality, I submit, is the "sea," a unit of specificity and relationality between the local and the global, between land and water, between self and other, whose eco-vernacular differences and specificities across "Oceania" have been awashed-over by exuberant and often shallow and highly tokenized invocations of an expansive Oceania.

The instrumentality of this local site, understood strongest in seafaring abilities (Diaz in press) is clear in how he described what he referred to as "ecologically-based oral traditions" that, in turn, had two foci: the first, a concentration on the people, by which he specifically meant the ". . . ordinary people, the

forgotten people of history, who have coped and are coping with their harsh realities, their resistance and struggles to be themselves and hold together" (Hauʻofa 2000, 457). The second, on what he called the "notion of ecological time" (458)—that aforementioned Indigenous temporality—as it was rooted in nature and traditional ecological knowledge based on it. To elaborate, Hauʻofa drew examples from Tongan, Fijian, and Kanaka Maoli vernacular discourses of time, citing, for example, Kanaka Maoli historian, Lilikala Kameʻeleihiwa's oft-cited observation that,

> It is as if the Hawaiian stands firmly in the present, with his back to the future, and his eyes fixed upon the past, seeking historical answers for present-day dilemmas. Such an orientation is to the Hawaiian an eminently practical one, for the future is always unknown, whereas the past is rich in glory and knowledge (Kameʻeleihiwa 1992, 22–23).

After fleshing out this modality a bit more, Hauʻofa offers a summary that locates a relationality to the past at the very core of our being, provided, that is, we are grounded so.[6] He writes,

> That the past is ahead, in front of us, is a conception of time that helps us retain our memories and to be aware of its presence. What is behind us cannot be seen and is liable to be forgotten readily. What is ahead of us cannot be forgotten so readily or ignored, for it is in front of our minds' eyes, always reminding us of its presence. The past is alive in us, so in more than a metaphorical sense the dead are alive—we are our history (Hauʻofa 2000, 460).

With such a conception of time immanent in us, Hauʻofa then shifts us to the ecological grounds proper that center and frame the inquiry:

> Where time is circular, it does not exist independently of the natural surroundings and society. It is very important for our historical reconstruction to know that the Oceanian circular time emphasis is tied to the regularity of seasons marked by natural phenomenon such as cyclical appearances of certain flowers, birds, and marine creatures, shedding of certain leaves, phases of the moon, changes in prevailing winds and weather patterns, which themselves mark the commencement of and set the course for cycles of human activities such as those related to agriculture, terrestrial and marine foraging, trade and exchange, and voyaging, all with their associated rituals, ceremonies, and festivities (Hauʻofa 2000, 460–61).

In Hauʻofa's essay, the line he draws from circular notions of time through our being to the spatiality of ecological groundwork ends in a discussion of technology that spirals back fittingly to ontology or beingness. Hauʻofa:

> Of equal importance in the consideration of the relationships between Oceanian societies and nature is the role of technology. The driving force that propelled human activities was the knowledge and skills developed over centuries, fine-tuned to synchronize actions with the regularities of nature. As it provided the vital link between the vital link between society and nature, technology cannot be dissociated from or seen to be independent of either. It was a vital and compatible component of the cycles. [. . .] For a genuinely Oceanian historiography, we could use this notion to reconstruct some of our pasts in terms of peoples' endeavors always to adapt and localize external borrowings and impositions, fitting them to their familiar cycles. In this way they actively transformed themselves rather than *just being passively remodeled by others* (Hauʻofa 2000, 461–62).

For short hand purposes, I suggest we think of what he says about technology in terms of how our ancestors *instrumentalized* the environment around them, and therefore, created themselves, into powerful forms of knowledge, beginning with instrumentalizing nature, so to speak, for the purposes of successful and capacious cultural and geographic mobility: this is what's expressed and contained in our seafaring traditions. I suggest, moreover, that we read his essay as a prompt to creatively instrumentalize those instrumentalizations into alternative visions of the present and futures (Goodyear-Kaʻōpua 2018). Thus, his essay permits us to not only imagine but perform the fluidities of Pacific pasts by using cultural forms and knowledge from our own islands and archipelagos and traditions. This specific grounding in place, marked by cultural and ecological rootedness—deep Indigenous ancestral and ecological verticality—or Native depth, for short—is vital because it is precisely through the fully embodied and multisensoried narrative instrumentalization of Indigenous ancestral and ecological verticality, of Native depth—that the other signature legacy of Pacific peoples and islands that Epeli celebrated in "Seas" is enabled and unleashed: indigenous geographic and discursive spread across temporal horizons, or simply, Native Reach. Here I'm not just reiterating a theoretical point about roots and routes (that needs constant reminding), but rather more specifically drawing from seafaring for more technical substantiation to show and work how native roots and routes are not mutually exclusive but mutually and powerfully constitutive and generative. I assert that if Epeli's "Sea of Islands" foregrounds and also expands upon the history of Native Pacific Reach, then his "Pasts to the

Remember" essay —a narratological instrumentalization of Indigenous Pacific cultural and ecological forms and knowledge for the purposes of creating new Pacific pasts (and futures)—*contracts* the space or field of play in the double sense of *scaling back* to appropriate locale and place—Native Depth—and also *negotiating or transacting* that space into new rounds of expanded Indigenous possibilities.[7] In this essay, Hauʻofa's bid to have us create our own pasts out of the specific cultural forms and ecological knowledge of our specific islands and seas opens to new futurities and new ways to imagine and ground political practice, an urgent matter facing Pacific Islanders in a world that doubles down on inequality and environmental destruction but through new hegemonic forms of embracing and presenting and thereby commodifying and coopting Indigenous Pacific culture and tradition in essentialist, ahistorical, ways.

In writing "Pasts to Remember" Hauʻofa had uppermost in mind the politics of knowledge production, of what was insidious about benevolent interest in Pacific cultural pasts in the work of sympathetic nonislander scholars, and this was matched by a larger developmentalist political context of colonial belittlement and erasure of Indigenous worlds, but also of postcolonial Pacific complicity. In the late 1980s and 1990s, Hauʻofa was responding to great strides in ethnographic history and historical ethnography in the Pacific, a relatively new paradigm that built upon earlier decades of work by the so-called Canberra School of Pacific history but as it had been inflected by critical ethnographic theory and practice. Uppermost in his mind, too, was a turn, in Pacific Anthropology, on the politics of culture and tradition. Having already left anthropology for creative writing, as Epeli was commandeering the University of the South Pacific into a center for Oceanic Performance, his essay acknowledged the value of the work by these non-Native anthropologists and historians, but stressed the need for Indigenous islanders to produce our own histories with our own Indigenous forms.

In the lead up to, but also in the aftermath of the publishing of "Pasts to Remember," and prompted perhaps most of all by Epeli's passing, "Sea of Islands" had also become so influential as to also become an obligatory citation for all of us to properly situate our work. Of late, the move also includes an especially insidious form of self-legitimization for new sectors and in certain contexts. An example of the former is a whole new tribe of historians writing what they are calling "Pacific Worlds" histories as if they have discovered a whole new world, and then hitch a ride on Hauʻofian expansiveness to the larger history of global flows of peoples, ideas, things, in ways that gut substantive centering on specific islands and islanders (Hanlon 2017). In this way, Hauʻofa and our Oceania are tokenized.

At the same time, among a new generation of Pacific Islander scholars and activists and cultural workers, Hauʻofa's "Sea of Islands" has inaugurated a trend,

far more authentic than the new historiography from without, to embrace the terms Oceania and especially *Moana*, over the term Pacific, for its fluidic sensibilities, and generally I've been supportive of this, as in fact, I even participate in forums and organizations and collectives that self-identify as "Moanan," though I am not Polynesian. But the problem here is also when Ocean as Moana conflates one part of the Pacific for the entirety, and loses specificity of seas, or, when we are reminded that most of the Pacific does not deal with the Ocean as do peoples from Polynesia and Micronesia (Jolly 2000).

In popular culture, the problems with overly exuberant culturalism of Oceanic expansiveness are seen in Disney's 2016 animated film *Moana* and in broader celebratory discourses of so-called "non-instrument" wayfinding, whose biggest problem is ahistorical valorization of sailing antiquity that denies the modern conditions of wayfinding's emergence—like science, corporate funding, state support, modern scholarship—while also erasing Indigenous technological and instrumentalized seafaring knowledge outside Polynesia. I can only summarize here the gist of my criticism.[8] In the film's narrative structure and iconography, in every dramatic moment where we are afforded an opportunity to actually see how real Indigenous seafaring technique and technology operate, Disney imagineers resolve the pragmatic problem with divine and mystical interventions—a magical wave or the spirit of a grandmother rights an upended canoe or points the way forward—ostensibly to honor the deep spirituality and *mana* (power) and oneness of Polynesian relationship with Moana the Ocean.[9] That emphasis may well be what its Pacific Islander consultants wanted emphasized, but it strikes me as a step backward given how colonial discourse has long relegated Pacific islanders to the realm of spirituality, physicality, passion, and expression as the forms of indigenous authenticity at the expense of indigenous intellectual and even science-like traditions. Locating "wayfinding"—a modern phenomenon or at least a phenomenon of revitalization in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries—in the ancient past and emphasizing mysticism, in my opinion, is a step backward of the not good kind.

So, in view of these post "Sea" essay developments inside and outside Pacific Studies as an academic field, I think that, ironically, Epeli's "Our Sea of Islands" unleashed a tidal wave of expansive thinking through abstracted or improperly scaled or just plain old tokenized ideas of Oceans, not of his doing, that had the effect of washing over the principal subjects contained in the title of that essay—Our Sea—the pairing of third person plural and collective subjectivity and possession, and that watery zone that is so central in seafaring islands: the Sea. The sea, here, is the appropriate scale and locality of instrumentalized ecological knowledge as understood in Pacific seafaring systems. Some of us, and our seas, consistently get washed out by the rush to expansive ideas of oceanic fluidity. It took almost 20 years, but I think I now know how our *Melanesian*

and Aboriginal land, and lake, and mountain, and valley cousins feel when the Oceans, Moana or otherwise, keep getting valorized as the essential marker of the Pacific. This is one of the values of working relationally, with people outside the Pacific, where Pacific Islanders have come to lap.

In any case, our project of what and how it takes to be Chuukese in Dakota Country and Skies shows the potential of keeping cultural depth and reach, roots and routes, always articulated together. The program of knowledge relations that I presented here, between one group of Natives displaced from their Indigenous homelands by US military and colonial/neocolonial development in/and with another Native group who continue to battle displacement on their own homelands by settler colonialism, offers a modality that consciously refuses to wash out difference, and consciously does so by embodying and deploying a framework that Chad Allen calls Trans-indigenous (Allen 2012). In effect, for Allen, transindigeneity is an analytical, ontological, and political category of Aboriginal claims and conditions to deep temporal specificity but that has the ability and capacity to reach across particularities in creative and powerful ways without losing specificity. One feature of Allen's definition of transindigeneity is the strategic use of creative juxtaposition of Indigenous traditions and histories and experiences that tend to be kept hermetically sealed from each other, precisely to see what political and cultural truths and insights might be unleashed or made possible when they are so juxtaposed. The method was, in part, also prompted by the historical and political circumstances of its production. His first book, *Blood Narratives* (Allen 2002), for example, examined blood and citizenship narratives in Indian country and in Māori country in Aotearoa. He is also an active leader in an international field of comparative Indigenous literatures as well as a larger field called Native American and Indigenous Studies, or NAISA (O'Brien and Warrior 2016), which in the past decade has been advancing forms of Native Studies that so juxtapose material from Indigenous studies in North America and the globe, with strong representation in the Pacific Islands, including Aboriginal Australia. If indigeneity is an abstract concept that can serve as an analytical and political commitment to interrogate the terms of aboriginal belonging to specific places through vernacular practices, transindigeneity offers the same promise but with attention to deep temporal specificity that has the ability and capacity to reach across particularities in creative and powerful ways without losing that specificity. When properly worked, specificity and particularity translate or circle back to temporal and discursive reach or expansiveness. Here is the proper relationship between seas and oceans, and that proper relationality requires knowing into whose home one has sailed as a condition for expanding one's possible homes or at least one's possible circuits of travel. This way of moving is categorically different from the imperialism of settler colonialism and larger colonial discourses. And here, the sky is the limit.

V. Conclusion

According to Lynn Sherr (2001) *America the Beautiful*, from whose lyrics we opened this article, sang more than high praises to the beauty of America's land, seas, and skies; rather, its most inspiring message was that, above life itself, for which life can be sacrificed, it is America the nation itself that stands for the loftiest ideals of freedom, liberty, and equality. On September 11, 2001, the same year that Sherr's book was published, that nation suffered an assault and a test that it had not experienced since the infamous day of infamy sixty years earlier, when Japan attacked a US military base in the occupied Hawaiian archipelago. In an interview shortly after 9/11, Sherr observed that it was the singing of America the Beautiful three days later, at the memorial at ground zero in New York City, that for her signaled America's ascent back to glory after those dark days following the attacks. But, like the song itself, the narrative that Sherr trumpets is of course the familiar and problematic story of American exceptionalism, one that we know is predicated on the erasure and disavowal of indigeneity both on the continent and across the ocean, along with the possession of the continent and the ocean, as the material precondition for the experiment of freedom, liberty, and equality, and for singing its highest praises. In stark contrast, indigenous struggles to reclaim self by reclaiming lands, waters, and skies through indigenous technologies and knowledge surge forward, upward, and outward, to remind us that where we stand is always on indigenous land, waters, and skyways. And that indigenous lands, waters, and skyways on and for which we stand are also never so separated, so compartmentalized from each other, as they have long been conceptualized and managed so in colonial discourse. As we have seen in this article, water's simultaneous capacity to serve as highway and as craft and technology of transportation is also matched by its simultaneous ability to transgress and abide the forms of containment, its abilities to not just shape shift but also shift the shape of everything around it, making water especially good to learn and teach with by way of building with. And because for Natives everywhere, the particularities of indigeneity and place matter, it is also critical to underscore the fluidity staked in the geographic and historical particularities here. Here, land is of the type where, "to travel at all is to travel by water," a place whose boosters call the "Land of 10,000 Lakes." MniSota is also where the Great Lakes meets the Great Mississippi (and its tributaries) meets up with the Great Plains, North America's largest biome and container of North America's largest body of water, the Ogallala Aquifer. Seen and motivated through such an indigenous water lens, the critical project pushes the Milanesians to learn to be Micronesian *in* Dakota country, to revitalize by knowing deeply where they are at and what differences this kind of fluidic relationality can have for new forms of relationships that do not replicate

the violence and tendencies of settler colonialism and exclusivist kinds of compartmentalized thinking. In the deep terms of indigenous knowledge and the relations of kinship and stewardship built on them.[10]

NOTES

[1]This article synthesizes work presented in three other venues in 2018: my Epeli Hauʻofa Memorial Lecture, delivered at the *"Two Horizons": Pacific Studies in a Cosmopolitan World* Conference. Biennial Conference of the Australian Association for Pacific Studies April 4–7, 2018, University of Adelaide, South Australia (for an excerpted version, see Diaz 2018a); an invited talk at the *Pacific Island Studies Now* Symposium, held at Northwestern University in Evanston, IL, in May 2018; and a paper for the panel on Indigenous Studies Approaches to Health Research, at the *Tenth Annual Native American and Indigenous Studies Association Meeting*, May 17–19, 2018, Los Angeles, California. Support for the project *Backing into Ancient Futures*, described in this article, is funded in part by the University of Minnesota Southwest Regional Sustainable Development Partnership, the University of Minnesota's College of Design spring seminars, Catalyst Challenge (in 2018 and 2019), and the University of Minnesota's Grand Challenge Initiative.

[2]Or is it? Mat Pendleton, a cultural practitioner and a project partner from the Lower Sioux Dakota Community tells me that Dakota tell of a canoe party, long time ago, that went all the way down the Mississippi river and was presumed lost, until, years later survivors of the party returned to tell of a voyage to a place, across a big body of water, where there were tiny men whose bodies were completely covered with hair. Dakota interpret these men as monkeys, and that the canoe party made it to Central or South America.

[3]For positive exposure in Minnesota public television, see the following video programs: Twin Cities Public Television (2019); Pioneer Public TV (2014).

[4]In Pacific literature proper, the intellectual precedence is typically identified as an "oceanic imaginary" credited to the pioneering work of Samoan writer and historian, Albert Wendt (Teaiwa 2010, 731).

[5]For a counterhistory that privileges and demonstrates indigenous spatial and temporal "explorations" by Kanaka Maoli, see David Chang (2016).

[6]For a fuller elaboration of Tongan conceptions of time-space, see Tevita Kaʻili (2017).

[7]This sense of contraction is my homage to my Filipino *tukayo* namesake and mentor, Vicente Rafael, in his pioneering book, *Contracting Colonialism*, first published in 1988.

[8]See Diaz (in press, 2016a, 2016b, 2018b).

[9]For a critical analysis of the subordination of indigenous perspectives at the level of narrative and rhetorical structure in Disney's *Moana*, see Anjirbag (2018).

[10]For critical work that unsettles settler colonial discourse by reclaiming indigenous water relations in the Great Plains, see the work of Métis scholar Zoe Todd (2018).

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