One Salt Water: The Storied Work of Trans-Indigenous Decolonial Imagining with West Papua

Bonnie Etherington

The white concrete walls of Cenderawasih University in Jayapura, West Papua, are topped with barbed wire and covered with graffiti, usually in a color scheme of red, blue, and black—colors frequently used to represent West Papuan identity. In December 2013, returning to Papua to visit after several years away in my passport country of Aotearoa/New Zealand, I passed the walls as I have done many times before. On one of the walls, I saw the image of the Morning Star flag—an overt symbol of Papuan independence. Also painted on a wall was a man wearing an Organisasi Papua Merdeka (Organization Papua Freedom) hat, along with the words "Refrendum [*sic*]," "Free West Papua," "PAPUA MERDEKA," "FREEDOM," and "NO" painted over "YES." Through these words and images, advocacy for—and resistance against—Papuan independence from Indonesia played out across the surfaces.

Advocacy for Papuan decolonization also plays out across the Pacific. In June 2017, in Vancouver, Canada, Kanaka Maoli scholar and musician Jonathan Kay Kamakawiwoʻole Osorio sang in tribute to the late Teresia Teaiwa (I-Kiribati) at the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association (NAISA) conference. He sang his song "One Salt Water," which includes the lines "West Papua you are not alone / Wansolwara [One Salt Water]." By singing this song at Teaiwa's tribute, Osorio acknowledged Teaiwa's consistent support for West Papuan freedom from Indonesia, and he used it to frame the ocean as a space of Indigenous solidarity with Papua. "One Salt Water" also highlighted the fact that, due to ongoing economic and political barriers, there were no Papuans in the room to present their own song. Osorio drew attention to their plight and their absence. The lyrics were first published in a 2015 special publication of

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Hawai'i Review entitled *Wansolwara: Voices for West Papua,* which features poems, lyrics, and art created by authors and artists from across Oceania in solidarity for Papuans after a hui (meeting) in Hawai'i, also called Wansolwara.[1]

In 2019, Rosa Moiwend, a West Papuan human rights advocate, sang Osorio's song alongside him at another NAISA conference, which was held at the University of Waikato in New Zealand.[2] She asked audience members to "create a wave in our ocean" that will bring peace to Papua. She argued that acts of "weaving our differences together" through telling stories, including through songs, are integral to creating lasting and effective Indigenous activist efforts across Oceania (Moiwend 2019). In particular, she suggested that storied acts are critical for incorporating Papua into the ocean named "wansolwara," a Tok Pisin/Melanesian Pidgin term. Her emphasis on stories as relational practices of creative exchange references the term "tok stori," a phrase prevalent across Melanesia that, as Kabini Sanga (Solomon Islands) and coauthors described, refers not to just any kind of storytelling but to an active, social process of making meaning that prioritizes relationality: "a Melanesian expression of commitment to togetherness manifest through engaging in *stori,* a shared narrative that dialogically constructs reality" (2018, 8).[3]

These three moments—my witnessing the walls on my return and the two "One Salt Water" performances—set the literary and political scene for this article. West Papua, often described as Indonesia's largest, most remote, and least populated eastern province, is, like the walls of Cenderawasih University, contested space.[4] Like the pages of the special issue and Osorio's song, Papuans gather together the stories and voices of Indigenous peoples across New Guinea, across Oceania, and in diaspora to protest colonialism and imagine decolonization in diverse but interwoven ways. Scholars have examined West Papuan efforts to gain merdeka, or freedom, from Indonesia by drawing from disciplines including political science, history, legal and human rights studies, and anthropology, which has led to many productive analyses of the decolonization movement within Papua.[5] I approach the movement, however, as a literary scholar to examine how non-Papuan Indigenous authors writing in solidarity for West Papuan decolonization participate in a wider heritage of storied protest in Oceania.

Calling this protest "storied" emphasizes the ways that activists, both Papuan and non-Papuan, use storytelling forms like songs, poems, visual art, and performance to contest colonial narratives of Papua and build

trans-Indigenous relationships between Papua and the rest of Oceania. I argue that the storied work of Indigenous protest with West Papua reveals how Papua's quest for merdeka participates in a more expansive push for decolonization across "one salt water." By using the term "trans-Indigenous" to describe these relationships, I follow Chadwick Allen (Chickasaw), who used "trans-Indigenous" to delineate a comparative approach for Indigenous literary studies that highlights global connections without erasing local particularities or collapsing relationships between groups of Indigenous peoples into multiculturalism (2012, xiii). As Allen showed, literature, in its diverse forms, is especially useful for revealing and fostering these kinds of relationships. The movement for merdeka has always been trans-Indigenous within Papua, as it brings together distinct Indigenous groups from across the island. But it is also trans-Indigenous across Oceania, and stories facilitate these expressions of decolonial kinship and make them visible.

At the same time that I draw on "trans-Indigenous," I take up the term "wansolwara," which offers a new vocabulary for tracing and understanding trans-Indigenous storied networks and relations in Oceania. Translated as "one ocean, one people," the term's connections with West Papua gained traction through two Wansolwara Dances, one in September 2014 (held in Madang, Papua New Guinea) and one in October 2016 (held in Vanuatu).[6] These gatherings used dances, songs, and other storytelling performances to advocate for Indigenous self-determination in the Pacific. Participants gathered from throughout Oceania, including church representatives, university faculty, the Port Vila Council of Chiefs, activist and human rights groups, and others. While participants came from diverse parts of the Pacific, the first event emphasized Indigenous solidarity for West Papua; the latter, for Vanuatu. As a term circulated and popularized through these dances and the affiliated April 2015 hui in Hawai'i, "wansolwara" became an extended metaphor for the work of imagining Indigenous self-determination in Oceania as bound up in transoceanic struggles. This concept grows from and invokes Albert Wendt's (1976) and Epeli Hau'ofa's (1998) visions for a relational, Indigenous New Oceania, even as wansolwara places the storied work of protest at the core of "decolonial imagining," or theorizing and enacting self-determination, as Fijian-Tongan writer Tagi Qolouvaki put it (2015). In this way, the concept of wansolwara demonstrates how decolonization is not just about political issues, but also concerns matters of cultural production.

My analysis of the poems in *Wansolwara* and of two Wansolwara Dance

"short stories" circulated before each dance builds on scholarship connecting Papuan musical texts to gestures of Melanesian kinship and Black anti-colonial movements worldwide. Scholars Camellia Webb-Gannon, Michael Webb, and Gabriel Solis have demonstrated how expressions of shared Blackness or "négritude" and "indigènitude," especially through music, facilitate Melanesian solidarities that push back against anti-Black colonial discourses (2018).[7] Webb and Webb-Gannon have also delineated how music constructs regionality and identity in Melanesia—what they, along with Stephanie Lawson (2013) and Tarcisius Kabutaulaka (2015), have termed "Melanesianism" (2016).[8] Additionally, Webb-Gannon and Webb, examining a body of Papuan freedom songs and a musical "Oceanian remix culture," linked the term "wansolwara" to a "new wave of Pasifika identity . . . whereby West Papuans have begun to envision themselves—and are being envisioned by other Pacific Islanders—as part of a unified Oceania" (2019, 312). In this article, I expand on these studies to show how wansolwara emerges as a concept of protest and creative production that prioritizes Papuan and Melanesian specificities as well as Papuan connections to other Indigenous peoples across Oceania. This concept portrays connections with Pacific Indigenous allies as integral to realizing visions for a decolonized Papua. In *Wansolwara,* authors from multiple locations across Oceania construct wansolwara as a framework for imagining a collaborative, Indigenous-centered model of protest for and with West Papua that is intimately in conversation with expressions of Melanesian solidarity. Moreover, the journal issue and the context from which it emerged illuminate how creative forms of protest by Indigenous allies with West Papua tell stories that retrieve Papua not only as part of Melanesia but also as part of Oceania.

Envisioning the ocean as wansolwara names the decolonial work of forging trans-Indigenous solidarities, coalitions, and kinships throughout Oceania. The special issue *Wansolwara* demonstrates that this work is an ongoing process that must account for heterogeneous experiences of Indigeneity and colonization, diaspora, and globalization. The poems portray local acts of merdeka, such as becoming an independent nation-state, as imbricated in wider "one salt water" acts. This is because modes of dispossession and the environmental ramifications of colonialism are not identical across different spaces, though they are interconnected. In the discussion that follows, I show how the poems in the journal issue and the "short stories" that preceded each Wansolwara Dance embody a model of protest that, as Qolouvaki poignantly expressed in a blog post

written after the hui, “makes kin-flesh of stories of Indonesian violence” (2015). I argue that these literary works claim the ocean as trans-Indigenous space in several ways: First, through strategies such as metaphor, collective voice, and reader participation, they narrate collaboration and solidarity as active forms of kinship predicated on reciprocal, intimate relationships with Papua. Second, as part of forming these relationships, their storied protest documents, raises awareness about, and contests oppression in Papua. Finally, wansolwara protest also compels readers to confront anti-Blackness in the Pacific and account for their complicity in Papua’s oppression and shared histories of exploited land, labor, and lives. This article will not provide a comprehensive account of the Pacific’s long history of trans-Indigenous advocacy. Rather, I analyze the poems in *Wansolwara* and the two dance stories to illuminate how, when envisioned as “one salt water,” the ocean is a place where Papua is mapped not as the easternmost province of Indonesia but as land and people in deep kinship with other Indigenous lands and peoples in Oceania. Papua thus becomes part of a decolonial future that is at once autonomous from *and* connected with other Indigenous peoples and their overlapping and distinct projects of self-determination. At stake, then, are understandings of Papuan self-determination beyond the nation-state, of Papuan kinships beyond New Guinea’s borders, and, ultimately, of the ways that Indigenous decolonial imagining with West Papua dilates decolonial possibilities across the Pacific.

The Bird of Paradise in Wansolwara: Narrating West Papua in Oceania

In this section, I first contextualize and define how the concept of wansolwara emerges in Oceania in relation to West Papua’s efforts for merdeka through creative protest. Papuans in both West Papua and Papua New Guinea describe the island’s topography as resembling a bird of paradise. Colonization, however, divided the island, the bird. The border drawn down New Guinea’s longitudinal center was established by the British in 1884, consequently severing West Papua politically, visually, linguistically, and discursively from Papua New Guinea, Melanesia, and the rest of Oceania. As Chris Ballard has stated, the “partition not only divided the land and the people of New Guinea, but also separated ‘Asia’ from the ‘Pacific,’ as objects for scholarly study, as regional ‘desks’ in Foreign Affairs departments, and as modes of discourse” (1999, 149). Yet to imag-

ine the island of New Guinea as a bird of paradise requires viewing the island as a whole, not as an entity conforming to or split by colonial borders. It envisions the island not as a static object, but as one that is active and mobile and can fly.

The United Nations transferred Papua to freshly independent Indonesia in 1963 after a series of Indonesian military interventions in Papua that began in 1961. The Dutch government, which had claimed Papua since 1824, planned to acquiesce to West Papuan desires for self-administration; however, the United States sought Indonesia's support against communism in the Asia-Pacific region and pressured the Dutch to allow Indonesian control of Papua. The Dutch agreed, on the condition that Papuans would vote on whether to integrate into Indonesia or become autonomous. In 1969, 1,025 Papuan men "voted" in a referendum called the Act of Free Choice, which Indonesian military organized, holding the men at gunpoint. The coerced result was in favor of becoming part of Indonesia. Indonesia then ignored Papuan campaigns to be recognized as an independent nation and began administering Papua as a settler state, extracting Papuan resources, implementing strategies to replace the Indigenous population, restricting foreign media access, and perpetuating other oppressive colonial policies, even after Indonesia granted Papua "special autonomy" status in 2001.[9]

Throughout this occupation, and despite threats of torture, imprisonment, and death, Papuans continue to assert their desires for merdeka through creative forms of protest. A Malay word, "merdeka" translates broadly as "freedom," but, as Webb-Gannon pointed out, nationalists invoked it so often across the Malay Archipelago in the twentieth century that it has since acquired explicit links to political independence (2014, 355). In Papua's context, Webb-Gannon delineated how "merdeka" aligns with unifying "concepts of positive peace and peace with justice" that necessitate but also extend beyond acquiring nation-statehood (2014, 356).[10]

Papuans often take up these concepts through songs. Insisting on a vision of the island as an undivided whole, contemporary West Papuan and Niu Gini activist musicians deploy the slogan "merdeka," imagery of the island, the Morning Star flag, and birds of paradise in songs that diversely assert Papuan resistance, aspire for transformation, and invoke trans-Indigenous relations that do not limit aspirations for decolonization to the colonially defined geography of West Papua. We see these strategies at work, for example, in the music video for the 2016 song

"Sorong Samarai" by Airileke Ingram (Gabba-Gabba, Papua New Guinea) and Benny Wenda (Lani, West Papua), which was produced in collaboration with multiple Papuan and Niu Gini artists.[11] In the first scene, the camera zooms in on a map of New Guinea, and viewers see the words "separated only by a colonial border." Next, the video displays the words "from Sorong in West Papua to Samarai in Papua New Guinea. We are one people." The border on the map dissolves, and viewers see one word, "Papua," crossing both halves, coupled with the caption "One people, one soul, one destiny." This wording challenges Indonesia's state-language motto: "Satu orang, satu Negara, satu bahasa, semua Indonesia" (One people, one Nation, one language, all Indonesia). The motto's claims of unity erase Papuan presence within Indonesia. By contrast, the artists re-center the idea of "oneness" in a preexisting vision of Papua—a Papua that includes both halves of New Guinea. The many different images and sounds of Papua portrayed in the video establish that this unity is overtly heterogeneous, like the "oneness" expressed in the term "wansolwara," emphasizing an ocean defined by diverse but related communities.

The song's title also demonstrates this vision of oneness. Sorong is a town near what is called the Bird's Head of Papua. Samarai is a town located near the tail. Exiled Papuan activist Wenda first used the term "Sorong Samarai" to express Papuan protest and oneness in an address to the United Nations in 1997. These references assert a vision of Papua as one interconnected island and not as split into two or more colonially divided pieces. While there are over 320 Indigenous groups, organized by language, in Papua itself, contemporary activists from West Papua predominantly articulate a vision of a united Papua, "tanah Papua" (land of Papua), rooting their claims for self-determination in the idea that, together, many different Indigenous peoples make up the shared body of Papua.

I describe the music video because it is an exemplar of contemporary Papuan protest and because it comes from an activist context that *Wansolwara* and the Wansolwara Dance stories engage as they likewise challenge colonial borders. Songs like "Sorong Samarai" narrate Papua's kinships with Papua New Guinea. Similarly, describing the ocean as wansolwara maps Papua's kinships with other parts of Oceania. The Free West Papua Campaign, run by the Office of Benny Wenda in the United Kingdom, wrote that it is critical that Melanesian nations "BRING WEST PAPUA BACK TO THE FAMILY" (2016). The campaign then invoked the term

"wansolwara," saying that it "is now being used across Melanesia and even the rest of the Pacific as a rallying call to unite people together" (Free West Papua Campaign 2016). This rallying call, which concludes the article, implies that Papuan activists seek reentry to a family that starts with Melanesia but will ideally go beyond to include Indigenous peoples across the Pacific. In these uses, wansolwara goes beyond nation-state-oriented visions of community. Benedict Anderson argued that visions of unity facilitated through standardizing language into Bahasa Indonesia were essential to achieving the "imagined community" of merdeka in Indonesia that led to its formation as a nation-state (2010). The imagined community of merdeka represented in the concept of wansolwara, however, embraces heterogeneous concepts of solidarity, including nation-state futures for Papua within a vast "one salt water."

As defined by the authors of *Wansolwara* and organizers for the 2014 and 2016 Wansolwara Dances (including participants Teaiwa, Moiwend, and Osorio), wansolwara is not an abstract concept but a method of kinship-based protest for Indigenous futurities expressed through story, echoing at a larger scale the ways that the creators of "Sorong Samarai" imagine a collective Papua. In 2014 and 2015, organizers for each dance held planning meetings in which they collectively (without assigning specific authorship) wrote up a "short story" to describe what they hoped to achieve through the dances. Aisake Casimira (Fiji), ecumenical director of the Pacific Conference of Churches, posted the first of these stories, "The Nadave Short Story: 'Remember, Protest and Proclaim,'" on Scribd (2014). 'Imi Pono, a Hawai'i-based website that advocates for Kanaka Maoli rights and global Indigenous issues posted the second story, "Enough is Enough: Affirmation, Celebration, Self-Determination" (2015). In "The Nadave Short Story," the collaborators, echoing themes that were later taken up in the special issue, describe wansolwara as follows:

> One people, One Sea. The ocean that connects us as people of the Wansolwara. It is sacred because it contains the memory of our grandparents and tells us the story about ourselves and who we are as a people. . . . It is not the idea of the single that is the object of our wonder in our Wansolwara. What is remarkable and extraordinary is the multiplicity of the many forms. . . . We will remember the un-free among us, those at the Northern, Eastern, Western and Southern corners of our Wansolwara and with their permission, we will stand with them on their grandparents' ground to cry freedom. (The Nadave Short Story 2014, 1–2)

In this articulation, wansolwara tells of memory and heritage. It depicts an ocean that draws on genealogies for power and knowledge in order to address oppression in all directions of the ocean. It is not about "the single," but it *is* about particulars and how they come together. It is about protest; it is political; it emphasizes multiplicity and relationships that prioritize consent, respect, and dignity; and it values collaborative, community advocacy and responsibility.

Specifically, the authors of both dance stories imagined connected Indigeneity through the capacious possibilities of story—which they framed as critical to the process of enacting decolonization, in Papua and across the Pacific—as they conveyed a resistance politics built on prioritizing Indigenous systems for being in the world and generating conversations between and among Indigenous peoples. In "The Nadave Short Story," they wrote, "We are Wansolwara. . . . We can understand or make sense of our individual stories only by coming to terms with the stories in which we find ourselves in [*sic*] and are a part" (The Nadave Short Story 2014, 2). Through telling stories about "one salt water," the contributors aimed to honor and make visible specificities, such as Papua's complex and layered colonization, while centering the embodied storied work involved in forging communities of Oceanic activism in the face of extensive networks of imperialism, colonialism, and capitalism.

Qolouvaki, who participated in the 2015 Hawai'i hui, likewise affirmed wansolwara's links with story:

> Our wansolwara is seeded through story. . . . From seed beginnings, great things will come. And so the art, the stories, the movements for a free West Papua, Hawai'i, Guahan, French Polynesia, Kanaky, Aotearoa, American Samoa—a free Oceania—were seeded by our ancestors; they are bearing fruit. (2015)

Qolouvaki associated diverse Indigenous movements for decolonization across Oceania through their emphasis on the heritage and work of story. These stories and their shared seeds suggest that Indigenous futures are bound up together. Furthermore, she suggested that wansolwara itself—the vision of an ocean connecting various strands of Indigenous futurity and thus bearing the "fruit" of these movements—is a community created through story, expressing active Indigenous presence and persistence.

The writers of the second Wansolwara Dance story, "Enough Is Enough," specified the decolonial possibilities of stories of Oceanic kinships. They asserted that emphasizing "one salt water" is "rooted in lib-

eration history," particularly the history of the Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific (NFIP) movement because it "paved new pathways for cross-Oceanic solidarity bridging islands and impacted peoples together" (Enough Is Enough 2015, 2). NFIP, an Indigenous-driven coalition formed in 1975, pushed for denuclearization in the Pacific and also demanded decolonization. "Enough Is Enough" implies that wansolwara is one of the movement's offspring. The emphasis on story and artistic work at the center of imagining wansolwara and its links to NFIP are also critical because nonartistic, nonactivist, intergovernmental entities designed to politically foster connections between Indigenous Oceanic peoples—such as the Melanesian Spearhead Group, formed in 1986—are not always sympathetic or consistent in their approaches to West Papua, though they have achieved other regional work. By highlighting specific lands but repeatedly invoking "our Ocean," and shared dreams for that ocean, the participants in the Wansolwara Dances suggested that the independence aspirations of those lands are magnified examples of decolonial desires throughout wansolwara (The Nadave Short Story 2014, 1).

Collaborative Wansolwara, Collaborative Merdeka

The dance stories were collaboratively written, used plural pronouns throughout, and did not list their specific authors even as they footnoted people responsible for certain ideas, creating a conversational, multivoiced effect as they constructed a vision of a storied, decolonial wansolwara. Likewise, the introduction to *Wansolwara* asserts in a collective voice that it expresses acts of "uniting across Oceania to lament and rage against this genocide, connecting our different communities' struggles for sovereignty and demilitarization, standing with Papua across our 'wansolwara,' our one salt water, with furious aloha" (2015, 6). The authors recognized that their communities might use their shared histories of colonization to mobilize, leveraging Oceanic connections, especially in Hawai'i in this case, leading to witness, dialogue, and accountability that call for expression and action that go beyond the hui and the issue's pages as they acknowledge the particular effects of colonialism on Papuan soil. In the next sections of this article, I analyze poems from *Wansolwara* in detail, demonstrating how they model a framework for collaborative decolonial activism in the Pacific that depends on relationships between Indigenous Oceanic communities while prioritizing West Papua's immediate and ongoing experiences of oppression.

The journal issue's first poem foregrounds collaboration saliently, requiring its audience to participate in its performance and its act of protest. Written by Lee Kava (Hafekasi/Tonga), and Tarcisius Kabutaulaka (Solomon Islands), the poem "rorongo / fanongo mai" visually and structurally commands participation. A line at the beginning notes, "*italics read by Lee,* regular text read by Tarcisius, **bold text read together**."[12] The title signals the genre of the poem, a kava chant, and calls people to listen. Kava and Kabutaulaka reinforce this instruction in the first verse, where the title is reiterated and "listen" is added in English and repeated three times, first in Kava's voice, then Kabutaulaka's, then in the voices of everyone participating (Kava and Kabutaulaka 2015, 8). The audience must listen to the poem and take part in select moments when they are encouraged to add their voices. These formal expectations enact a "one salt water" coalition in poem and protest that allows different voices to be heard while creating opportunities to come together and amplify when required.

For the speakers of "rorongo / fanongo mai," kava, as a drink and as ceremony, is an embodied act of "story" and protest. Taking turns, the speakers offer their definitions:

> **we share kava**
> *as story*
> as body
> *as blood*
> as memory
> **as resistance—**
> (Kava and Kabutaulaka 2015, 8)

This verse's layout on the page suggests that the words bookended by the collectively voiced lines (marked in bold) are part of both kava and resistance. That is, kava is story, body, blood, and memory, and these elements compose resistance. By offering kava, the speakers imply that they also give the recipients storied, embodied acts of shared resistance. After telling the story of the kava plant in both Tongan and English, they affirm their place in the "*sea of islands*" (9–10). Kava and Kabutaulaka write, "we are not just Melanesia, *Polynesia,* Micronesia, / *we are sister,* brother, *auntie,* uncle, **ancestor** / *and as connected Islanders* / we are stories of resistance" (9). In these lines, the speakers affirm shared Pacific Island kinship, quoting Hau'ofa and referring to his vision of the New Oceania as defined and maintained by ongoing relationships among the "sea of

islands." Only after establishing these ties to the connected Oceania do the speakers say, "*this story* / this bilo [cup] / *this kava* / **is for the resistance in West Papua**" (10). By telling the localized kava story first, then establishing the speakers' connections to Oceania, the writers specify their poem's—and the speakers'—position as ally but also outsider in relation to the West Papuan resistance. Simultaneously, they make the participatory work of "story" and of exchanging kava part of maintaining kinships within the sea of islands. They suggest that maintaining those kinships can be resistance itself.

The speakers' repeated exhortations to listen, receive, see, and take part through embodied acts reinforce bonds between story and resistance throughout Oceania. "**Papua Merdeka** // *this is what we serve*— / when you receive kava," they say (Kava and Kabutaulaka 2015, 10). This assertion infers that exchanges of kava and story are part of merdeka. The speakers require that the audience listen and witness "*because our stories make visible / our Oceania*" (10). Stories are integral not only to resistance in Oceania but also for building the relationships that create Oceania. This is because "our stories weave relationship / when border lines are drawn" (11). In the same way that "Sorong Samarai" narrates kinships that resist the border dividing New Guinea, the speakers suggest that their stories can also narrate relationships that resist borders. They argue that their stories are about witnessing, through acts of listening and seeing and acts of constructing and repairing relationships across borders. The speakers use references to blood and land to emphasize these relationships, writing, "*our connection to one another / was strained through blood / and land*" (11). For the speakers, making visible shared histories of colonial violence in Oceania, as well as familial or kinship ties, is part of the repair work, the weaving work, that they envision for restoring their connections. As they assert at the end of the poem, they must not only listen to those stories but also "*tell*" them (12). Making visible "one salt water" requires *telling* and not merely seeing or hearing of West Papua's experiences and responding with silence.

The kinships the speakers weave include shared Indigenous and Black (Melanesian) histories. At the end of the poem, the speakers return to themes of shared experience, saying "we bleed / black and red / **we are connected, wansolwara!**" (Kava and Kabutaulaka 2015, 12). This line references the activist campaign We Bleed Black and Red, which is linked to the wansolwara movement and has a slogan that appears several times in the journal issue.[13] References to both Redness and Blackness remind

us that it is imperative that we do not erase "Melanesianism," as Kabutaulaka has referred to it elsewhere, from readings of protest texts for and with West Papua (2015, 111). Erasing Melanesianism can reinforce how, as Lawson noted, narratives of Oceania often "privilege 'Polynesian-ness'" and obscure anti-Melanesian racism in the region (2013, 3). Lawson and Kabutaulaka have both shown how Europeans constructed Melanesia in an explicitly racialized way, defined by Blackness against their construct of Polynesians. Wansolwara activist poems and narratives like this poem, however, deploy Blackness as a marker of kinship and pride. The use of the words "black" and "red" is critical here because, as Robbie Shilliam has illustrated, Oceanic peoples are frequently invisible in the definition of "Black Pacific," even as Indigenous peoples have taken up references to Blackness to engage in "part of a global infrastructure of anti-colonial connectivity" (2015, 10). The poem "rarongo / fanongo mai" is part of this same heritage, as it highlights Black Pacific Indigeneity in its acts of collaboration.

The speakers do not mention wansolwara until almost the end of the poem, coinciding with the emphasis on shared Indigeneity and prioritized Blackness. The very last line is reserved for "**Papua Merdeka!**" (Kava and Kabutaulaka 2015, 12). At the end of this poem, which depends on collaborative participation and creation, wansolwara and the call for Papua's merdeka occur in collectively voiced lines, making visible *and* audible collaborative stories and protest. In these ways the speakers set up wansolwara as a resistance framework built through relationships and solidarities made possible through the storied space of the ocean. By finishing with "**Papua Merdeka!**" the speakers remind participants whose story they amplify in that moment.

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Throughout the special issue, solidarities are frequently expressed as intimacy. While solidarity can simply suggest people or groups coming together with a shared goal or common interest, defining solidarity as an intimate act signals a state of being together that depends on relationship, consent, and attachment, both physical and emotional, and connotes confidence built on trust and reciprocal responsibilities. The poem "A Love Letter to West Papua" by Kanaka Maoli scholars No'u Revilla and Jamaica Osorio (2015) explicitly expresses this sense of solidarity by staging a dialogue with West Papua focused on establishing emotional affinity

that leads to intimacy in ways that expand and complicate the political possibilities of decolonization.

The form of the poem itself, as its title makes clear, is a love letter, perhaps spoken in multiple voices, and this form suggests a desire to build intimacy between the speakers and the receivers. The speakers figure the addressee of the letter, Papua, as a literal bird of paradise, whose body "has been split in / half Papua, half Papua." "I met you with your scars," the poem begins, acknowledging the physical effects of colonial and capitalist violence and borders on the land, the body of the bird of Papua. The effects are not just physical. The speakers lament that colonialism disrupts the relationships Papua could have with others in Oceania. They say that they "know so little of [its] body," wanting to know more of Papua's "spine, terrain, lifelines" and describing the land as a living and agential being (Revilla and Osorio 2015, 13). In effect, the speakers theorize how they can achieve intimacy between themselves and Papua when limited information about Papua is available beyond its borders and when it is so difficult for outsiders, especially artists and activists, to enter Papua.

The poem is one half of a potential dialogue or exchange of messages between lovers. "If I hold you close, will I hear machetes on / your neck? Or drums?" the speakers ask. Though the phrasing indicates uncertainty, the possibility that they will hear drums suggests that the speakers hope to open a dialogue with Papua through their poem. Drums across New Guinea are mediums for communicating and creating relationships between people. Read in this context, the poem's drums indicate hope for trans-Indigenous communication and knowledge exchange. Still, Revilla and Osorio's poem acknowledges the hurdles placed in the way of the exchange, hurdles echoed in the poem's uneven rhythm. Some of the poem's strongest and most regular stresses occur in the stanza that lists "*acts of 'free choice'*" involved in the United States' colonization of Hawai'i: the 1887 Bayonet Constitution and the 1893 overthrow of the Kingdom of Hawai'i (Revilla and Osorio 2015, 13). By listing these moments of occupation and overthrow as "acts of free choice," Revilla and Osorio link them to Papua's own supposed act of free choice, in which the referendum determining Papua's fate was conducted at gunpoint.

But the speakers in this "love letter" do not want these acts, the "pieces we have in common" (colonial violence), to be the sole reasons for intimacy and dialogue between their communities. They want to "push past the language of solidarity," toward more embodied, intimate acts, as they know that language alone is not enough when it comes to obtain-

ing merdeka. As evidence, the speakers note the twenty-one thousand Kanaka Maoli signatures expressing solidarity with Queen Liliʻuokalani and opposing the annexation of Hawaiʻi. The international community subsequently ignored this 1893 act of solidarity. While the poem's speakers locate themselves as witnesses to Papua's trauma and as peoples who have persisted through related violence, they ask for a relationship that is more than a connection created by shared experiences. The speakers describe "touching" as "a ceremony of resistance" that will "keep the pit from growing" between Papua's two halves and between Papua and themselves (Revilla and Osorio 2015, 13). The touching described—holding hands, kissing where "your bilum [net bag] sits" at the back of the neck—is the kind we associate with people being in a consensual, loving relationship. As a love letter, this poem indicates the speakers' desire to connect intimately, even if the outcome is uncertain.

What the speaker or speakers do know and name is what they hope for Papua: "to be in charge of loving itself" (Revilla and Osorio 2015, 14). I read this line as the poem's own definition of decolonization, made possible through embodied acts of solidarity. This poem is an offer of intimate collaboration that goes beyond political support and is a gesture of mutual empowerment. It highlights the absence of consent in colonially imposed "acts of free choice" and models acts of exchanging stories to negotiate Indigenous-centered relationships that will support Papua's efforts for justice at international levels. From one colonized place (Hawaiʻi) to another (Papua), the speakers reach out. Read as part of the journal issue, then, both "rorongo / fanongo mai" and "A Love Letter to West Papua" represent different ways of enacting and extending visions of a collaborative, intimate wansolwara.

Documenting Violence and Complicity in "One Salt Water"

In the previous section, I showed how "rorongo / fanongo mai" models forms of ongoing storied collaboration that can lead to relationships and fosters the kind of active intimacy that Revilla and Osorio's "A Love Letter to West Papua" represents as solidarity. Other poems in the issue suggest that solidarity also involves bringing knowledge of the human costs of colonialism into proximity with the speakers and their audience—particularly the costs of anti-Blackness in the Pacific. Intimate acts of wansolwara activism necessitate conveying historical, statistical, and political informa-

tion about Papua to non-Papuans; documenting atrocities; and framing the poem's speakers as witnesses. Two poems in particular, "Nine Percent" by Lyz Soto and Bryan Kuwada (Kanaka Maoli) and "Pacific Tongues for West Papua" by Hawai'i-based Pacific Tongues youth poets Jocelyn Ng, Harrison Ines, Malia Derden, and Sarah Daniels, engage in documentary poetics in order to invoke solidarity that specifically addresses the role of resource exploitation and anti-Blackness.[14] The authors of "Nine Percent" compile statistics and historical, geographic, and astronomical details, especially those connected to the Freeport-McMoRan mine near Puncak Jaya in Papua, while "Pacific Tongues for West Papua" focuses on military recruiters who target Indigenous youth.

Collectively, they account for the effects of colonialism in West Papua and document their own Hawai'i-based connections to, complicity in, and understanding of those effects. Against the Indonesian government's obstruction of media access to Papua and suppression of information, the poets curate facts, figures, and histories for readers. The poems highlight how subjective, limited, and fragmented "official" narratives about Papua can be. They also show that the speakers are aware of their own distance from Papua and the difficulties of mediating information. Their communal acts of witness and reportage create spaces for non-Papuan readers to gain knowledge and to examine their own complicity in Papua's circumstances. In this way, the two poems' authors show how the peoples and the land of Papua are not isolated from their primarily Hawaiian audience's world, and they emphasize that knowing about Papuan connections to their own lives is a collective responsibility.

In "Nine Percent," Soto and Kuwada evoke this collective responsibility by listing significant numbers and statistics at the beginning and end. The poem begins:

> In 2013, the American mining company Freeport McMoRan made 4,346,000,000 dollars from the Grasberg mine in West Papua, which produced 885 million pounds of copper and 1.1 million ounces of gold for the 299 million computers, 179 million tablets, and 284 million smart phones that we bought that year. (Soto and Kuwada 2015, 18)

The poem introduces context that may at first seem distant from most readers' lives. The Grasberg mine, located in the Tembagapura district of Papua and owned and operated by Arizona-based Freeport-McMoRan since 1973, is the world's largest gold mine. In 2017, the Indonesian government became the primary shareholder. The journal issue first refers to

the mine through its cover art: a red block print by Joy Enomoto (Kanaka Maoli) and Bafinuc Ilai (Niu Gini) called *West Papua Merdeka!,* which represents "the women of West Papua being severed from their land and the land itself being desecrated through the Grasberg Mine" (*Hawai'i Review* 2015, 2). This image immediately grounds the issue's contents in a specific aspect of Papua's push for merdeka—resisting resource extraction. Furthermore, the introduction to the issue connects the environmental and social effects of mining in Papua to "silence" from those who, in the "'modern world' continu[e] to blithely benefit from the bits of copper and gold essential to the constructing of our electronic devices and the building of our cities" (*Hawai'i Review* 2015, 6). This sentence implies that literal pieces of Papua's land are vital for maintaining modernity elsewhere and names the contributors and readers as complicit in the ongoing destruction of Papua.

"Nine Percent" extends this emphasis on complicity. Readers might be tempted to skim over the dollars, pounds, and ounces listed, but the poem translates the gold and copper into objects that are more intimate parts of their lives: computers, tablets, and smartphones.[15] The end of the poem lists more statistics, bringing those numbers closer and closer to readers' lives. First, they tell readers that five hundred thousand Papuans have died during Papua's occupation. Then, using black typeface on the left and red on the right (shown in italics here), they elaborate:

> *That's 500,000 dead in 50 years.*
>
> That's 10,000 deaths per year.
>
> *That's 27.39 deaths per day.*
>
> That's 1.14 deaths per hour.
>
> 9% of a person died while you listened to this poem
> What is the price of a Papuan life?
> (Soto and Kuwada 2015, 20)

Readers must wait until the second to last line of the poem to understand what the "Nine Percent" in the title refers to. By this time, the speakers have moved from connecting their numerical account of colonialism and resource extraction to readers' electronics to tying it to readers' very acts of consuming the poem itself: they communicate death through the min-

utes or seconds the audience has spent with the poem, compelling them to think about the monetary and temporal value of a Papuan life.

Furthermore, "Nine Percent" shows how the worlds of Papua and Hawai'i converge by illuminating the Kanaka Maoli audience's connections to Papuan resources in their electronics, jewelry, and more. It also refers to Hawaiian landscapes and stars, showing how the morning star, Venus or Hōkūloa, has an orienting role in Kanaka Maoli geography and cosmology just as it does in Papua. The poets explicitly focus on the speaker's position in relation to the stars: "When I leave my house / I put the morning star to my back." This is not done to ignore it, but rather to "lea[n] down to work in [its] light." The speaker then uses this position to connect the labor of the poets, dependent on the resources of Papua and bent under the light of the same stars, to the labor of Papuans in the mine. For the speaker, the morning star "comes from the east . . . but its eyes too look to the west" (Soto and Kuwada 2015, 18). By following the movements of this star, the speaker is able to witness the Papuans whose deaths the poem references.

However, the speaker emphasizes how exploitative labor practices in Hawai'i and Papua and anti-Blackness attitudes that persist across the Pacific obscure the value of those deaths. The deaths are:

> obstructed by black in the mines
> *at $1.50 and a death every hour*
> obstructed by black in the ledger
> *drawing out cartographic tracks*
> *of our progress*
> obstructed by black on the map
> *constructed by the toll of our lives*
> obstructed by they are black
> and their lives are cheap
> (Soto and Kuwada 2015, 19)

The speaker repeats "obstructed" and "black" in every black line on the left side of this section, juxtaposed against the red type on the right side of the page. As black ink in the ledger and lines on a map grow, consumers simultaneously devalue Black lives. "Progress" and capital have value here, while Black lives are confined, literally, to repeated obstruction. Both "Nine Percent" and "Pacific Tongues for West Papua," by illuminating how money is valued more than Black and Brown lives, show how capitalism depends on racist policies and erasures. Capitalism and the mili-

tary force destructive encounters between Indigenous peoples, as we see in "Pacific Tongues for West Papua" when Kanaka Maoli youth fight in wars instigated by the United States and in both poems where speakers exploit resources extracted violently from Papua. These kinds of global connections perpetuate everyday acts that use, devalue, and dispense of Indigenous peoples' lives.

"Pacific Tongues for West Papua" similarly compels its audience to think about how exploitative practices devalue Indigenous lives. Its speakers advocate for collective accountability for these practices through strategic use of militaryspeak that connects US military recruitment of Pacific youth to Papuan deaths, highlighting how the US government enables the Indonesian military. The speakers describe how military recruiters visited their schools to create a "brown military," pitting Indigenous peoples against each other and taxing them to fund wars (Ng and others 2015, 22). "Disassemble sight" and "Polish clean," the speakers repeat, chantlike or as if they are marching (23). This language of firearms use and maintenance also reflects how the militarization of the Pacific "disassemble[s] sight," or blinds other Indigenous populations from Papua's plight and erases Papuan stories through the repetition of its own narratives of war and control. The military recruits the speakers' lives into projects that perpetuate genocide in Papua, and the effects of these projects build as the poem progresses:

> **load**
> mother earth mined for her heart
> **lock.**
> heart into the chamber of a missile
> **safety off**
> Watch missile placed into hands of brown body
> Watch brother shoot brother
> Watch brown bodies break like boulders
> **Reload. Repeat**
> watch sons shot into soil
> (Ng and others 2015, 24)

The speakers of this poem place readers in a position of holding the firearm. They do not allow readers to avoid complicity, even as they emphasize kinship ties between the shooters and those shot by referring to them as "brother" and "sons." In this way, the youth poets depict complex and violent entanglements between Hawai'i and Papua, built on the recruited

lives of Indigenous youth and reinforced through the taxes that simultaneously fund that recruitment and keep Indigenous eyes from seeing each other across the ocean.

However, the authors do turn their eyes to global connections that are more hopeful through the kind of witness they enact through their poems. In "Pacific Tongues for West Papua," the poem ends by addressing a global audience:

> Dear world,
> we are here today in the Pacific to make a difference
> We make a difference by giving voice to the silenced
> to give voice
> we wrote this poem
> to write this poem
> we first learned
> how to listen.
> (Ng and others 2015, 25)

This ending mirrors the sentence structure of the beginning of the poem, which reads:

> They came to the pacific to make money
> they make money by raping the land
> to rape the land they kill the people
> To kill a person you need a gun
> (Ng and others 2015, 22)

The sentences at both ends of the poem depend on a logical structure that traces how one action leads to or depends on another. At first, this logic shows how making money in the Pacific is connected to the killing of Indigenous peoples and resource extraction. But the ending of the poem portrays a logical structure of witness through its syntax. The speakers want to "make a difference," and, in their perspective, this means "giving voice." Their poem is one way to give voice, but in order to write it, they "first learned / how to listen" (25). Listening, then, for these speakers, like in "rorongo / fanongo mai," lies at the core of witness but does not correspond to enacting positive change unless the listeners then create a platform for "the silenced" to be heard.

At the end of "Pacific Tongues for West Papua," the speakers refuse the colonial logic that began the poem and replace that logic with Indigenous-centered logic. Correspondingly, "Nine Percent" provides a framework of

witness that depends on Kanaka Maoli cosmology, not colonial systems of knowing. Making Papua's struggles legible in this poem, as well as in others in *Wansolwara,* entails translating Papuan struggles into terms that audiences beyond Papua understand. But both of these poems push at colonial structures of disseminating information, corresponding with Mohawk scholar Audra Simpson's notion of "refusal" as an avenue for Indigenous peoples to reject colonial forms of legibility and recognition and to choose the terms of engagement (2014, 11). Legibility in "Nine Percent" and "Pacific Tongues for West Papua" entails seeking recognition from other Indigenous peoples, not from colonially centered structures, and such recognition also requires seeing one's own complicity: how one reads away 9 percent of a human life, uses electronics built with Papuan deaths, ignores the paths of tax dollars, and is recruited into the military-industrial complex and how capitalism trains us to skim over numbers, over deaths. The combined voices in these poems, heard at the hui and written on these pages, emphasize community responsibility rather than merely community recognition and suggest that responsibility for decolonization means collaborating not just on behalf of their Kanaka Maoli communities but also on behalf of Indigenous communities across wansolwara, including West Papua.

Conclusion: Wansolwara, a Framework of Protest for Oceanic Liberation

To tie off the threads of this article, I return to Jonathan Kay Kamakawiwoʻole Osorio's "One Salt Water" (2015). It has four stanzas. The first lines of the first two stanzas read like a lament: "Once I had a memory that was long / Once I had a garden now it's gone" and "Once I caught my fish within this net / Once I knew what I should not forget." By themselves, these lines seem to express nostalgia for the past and for enduring forms of memory and knowledge. But in both of these stanzas, there is a turn after the first lines that shifts to directly address wansolwara: "Wansolwara I believe your song" and "Wansolwara you will lead us yet." These turns indicate more hope than their first lines suggest, invoking the future. The speaker bases his hope in Oceanic song and story and in the Indigenous interdependence wansolwara conveys. The final stanza focuses on West Papua. Its first two lines repeat the syntactic formulation of the earlier stanzas: "Once I saw the morning star at dawn / Once I saw their armies sailing home." But the formulation now appears prophetic, as it

follows a stanza that focuses on wansolwara's future, saying, "Our children will return their lives to thee." Osorio's speaker implies that returning lives to the sea, to their Oceanic heritages and modes of connection, is what leads to "armies sailing home" and ending Papua's isolation. Osorio advocates for activism that is Melanesian-centered while firmly oriented toward Oceanic heritage and Oceanic futures. His song sees liberation for Papua stemming from shared "one salt water" connections between Indigenous peoples.

Osorio's lyrics show that we can read protest texts about the West Papuan independence movement as constructions of the trans-Indigenous "one salt water" without erasing Papuan distinctiveness or obscuring Melanesian emphases. Wansolwara is not a "Pan-Oceania identity" in the same sense as concepts such as the Pacific Way, although the Pacific Way forms part of its heritage (Kabutaulaka 2015, 125). Kabutaulaka has noted that while the Pacific Way is a concept often described as "anticolonial and representing Oceania as a region . . . that is politically united," the concept flattens differences and tends to privilege Polynesian peoples and causes over Melanesian—and Micronesian—ones (2015, 125). Works such as Bernard Narokobi's *The Melanesian Way* (1983), which advocates for Melanesian solidarity as a basis for anti-colonialism, have made room for West Papuan participation, but expressions of wansolwara protest clearly gesture beyond Melanesian connections. Envisioned as "one salt water," Oceania provides a space for conversations that set up Melanesian-based structures of solidarity and activism, with an eye to Oceania-wide decolonial futures. Wansolwara protest politics also make room for diasporic Indigenous communities, which is especially pertinent, as many of West Papua's artists and activists live in exile.

Tracey Banivanua Mar identified the 1970s as the time when decolonization movements in the Pacific became transnational, tracing the origins of this transnationalism to West Papuan independence campaigns that were (and are) directed at Indigenous and international audiences (2016). She wrote that it was "the most coherent of the transnational and global threads that underpinned networks of decolonization throughout the Pacific" (Mar 2016, 182). *Wansolwara* emphasizes that these networks and the decolonial imagining they make possible depend on art and story because stories of Indigenous Pacific kinship make visible the transoceanic effects of entwined colonial and capitalist violence on land and on people. They provide spaces to theorize and mobilize audiences of Indigenous peoples and allies throughout the Pacific for collaborative

activism in order to build sustainable and just Oceanic futures, prioritizing reciprocity and responsibility.

Osorio constructs "One Salt Water" as a hui space in his poem: it is a place of gathering and conversation and action—specifically an Indigenous place that foregrounds not only how colonialism has excluded Papua but also how other Oceanic peoples have excluded Papua and perpetuated ignorance and racism on its peoples. "One Salt Water" is a textual gathering place, a gathering of stories. As Teaiwa noted about the first Wansolwara Dance: "a crucial dimension of the gathering was a commitment to putting artistic and creative practice at the center of our activism" (quoted in Anderson 2014). Through storied expressions of wansolwara protest, West Papua's struggle becomes Oceania's struggle. The *Wansolwara* poems are part of a continuum of diverse modes of decolonial activism within Papua and beyond that theorize what the "wave," to return to Moiwend's term, of Indigenous solidarity, collaboration, and persistence can mean across the diverse wansolwara.

* * *

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Notes

1 According to Tagi Qolouvaki, this event was hosted by people involved with Ke Ka'upu Hehi 'Ale (the wave-treading black-footed albatross) and Hawai'i Bleeds Black and Red (2015). The introduction to *Wansolwara* also credits the

Gladys Kamakakūokalani ʻAinoa Brandt Center for Hawaiian Studies at the University of Hawaiʻi–Mānoa (UHM), Pacific Tongues, the UHM Creative Writing Program, and UHM Indigenous Politics. Furthermore, the introduction notes that an 11 March 2015 artist workshop preceded the hui (*Hawaiʻi Review* 2015, 6). In addition to Osorio, authors and artists included in the issue are Lee Kava, Tarcisius Kabutaulaka, Noʻu Revilla, Jamaica Osorio, Brandy Nālani McDougall, Craig Santos Perez, Lyz Soto, Bryan Kuwada, Rajiv Mohabir, Jocelyn Ng, Harrison Ines, Malia Derden, Sarah Daniels, Ry Rarai Aku Jr, Joy Enomoto, Bafinuc Ilai, Luseane Raass, Raymond Mulitalo, Culture Shocka, and two anonymous artists.

2 I participated in this roundtable alongside Moiwend, who also took part in the Wansolwara Dances.

3 Researchers such as Sanga and coauthors have noted that tok stori is a key part of political processes in Melanesia (2018), similar to the process of talanoa as it is referred to in other areas of the Pacific. Both are used for resolving differences and are engaged as critical methods for research, learning, and other relational situations.

4 The western side of New Guinea has had many names, including Dutch New Guinea, Western New Guinea, Irian Jaya, and West Papua (Papua Barat). Technically, West Papua is now divided into two Indonesian provinces—West Papua and Papua—but only government departments usually differentiate the two. When Papuans use "West Papua" or just "Papua" they generally refer to the entirety of New Guinea west of the border with Papua New Guinea.

5 See Ballard 1999; Gardner and Waters 2013; Glazebrook 2004; Golub 2014; King 2004; Kirksey 2012; MacLeod 2015; Penders 2002; Rutherford 2012; Saltford 2002; Smythe 2013; Webb-Gannon 2014.

6 *Wansolwara* is also the name of the University of the South Pacific's student newspaper, founded in 1996 and centralized in Fiji, which is well recognized for its political coverage.

7 See also Solis 2014; Webb-Gannon 2014; Webb and Webb-Gannon 2016.

8 Webb-Gannon and Webb have written thorough analyses of the connections between Melanesian protest music and expressions of Black solidarity (Webb and Webb-Gannon 2016; Webb-Gannon and Webb 2019), as has Julian Smythe (2013), and Solis has examined how Pacific peoples popularize tropes associated with music produced by Black artists for anti-colonial ends (2014).

9 For more comprehensive documentation and analyses of the events that led to Indonesia's control of West Papua, see Penders 2002; Saltford 2002. The government has yet to enact many of the clauses defining Papua's special autonomy status. See also King 2004 for a summary of West Papua's post-1998 history with Indonesia.

10 Likewise, Jason Macleod summarized "merdeka" as "visions of freedom encapsulated in a thick description of self-determination" (2015, 18).

11 The music video, which also features Ronny Kareni and other musical artists from across New Guinea, can be viewed on YouTube: "SORONG SAMARAI - Airileke Feat. Twin Tribe" (30 Nov 2016), video clip, accessed 5 March 2018, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=faJfu-FJVto.

12 I keep the original italics and bold font throughout my analyses of the poems.

13 The We Bleed Black and Red campaign originated in Fiji and is closely tied to the Free West Papua movement. Other movements linked to wansolwara include Youngsolwara, which is youth-focused, and Oceania Interrupted, a group of Māori and Pasifika women dedicated to spurring collective decolonial action.

14 The Hawai'i-based organization Pacific Tongues works to foster creative community in Oceania.

15 It is perhaps no coincidence that these objects depend on the Internet. See Titifanue and others 2016 for more on social media, the Internet, and West Papuan protest.

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Abstract

Scholars have examined West Papuan efforts to gain merdeka, or freedom, from Indonesia through the lenses of political science, history, legal and human rights studies, and anthropology, which has led to many productive analyses of the independence movement. However, while gesturing to the storied manner in which the movement plays out, driven by narrative and symbol both within and outside of West Papua, these frameworks do not go far enough to unpack the implications of the creative literary expressions that shape the movement and drive support for it beyond Indonesia's borders. Activism constructs and depends on

narratives—on stories. In this article, I analyze the poems from a special issue of *Hawai‘i Review* titled *Wansolwara: Voices for West Papua* alongside two Wansolwara Dance short stories to bring a literary lens to storied expressions of Indigenous solidarity with West Papua. I argue that the Tok Pisin term "wansolwara," or "one salt water," offers new vocabulary for understanding Indigenous networks and relations in Oceania expressed through forms of protest. The poems in the special issue use wansolwara as a framework for imagining a resurgent Indigenous-centered model of activism for and with West Papua that envisions the capacious possibilities of stories in their myriad forms for the critical remapping work required to restore Papua's relationships with Oceania. Consequently, they illuminate how Indigenous decolonial imagining with West Papua dilates decolonial possibilities across the Pacific.

KEYWORDS: West Papua, Oceania, Melanesia, literature, art, decolonization, activism