Central Washington University

ScholarWorks@CWU

English Faculty Scholarship College of Arts and Humanities

4-4-2019

Transpacific Resonances and Affiliations in Leanne Dunic's to Love the Coming End and Ruth Ozeki's the Tale for the Time Being

Michel O'Brien
Central Washington University, m.obrien@cwu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.cwu.edu/cahfac_english

Part of the Comparative Literature Commons, Japanese Studies Commons, and the Literature in English, North America Commons

Recommended Citation

O'Brien, Michelle. "Transpacific Resonances and Affiliations in Leanne Dunic's to Love the Coming End and Ruth Ozeki's the Tale for the Time Being." *New Global Studies*, vol. 13, no. 1, 2019, pp. 35–59. https://doi.org/10.1515/ngs-2019-0006.

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the College of Arts and Humanities at ScholarWorks@CWU. It has been accepted for inclusion in English Faculty Scholarship by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks@CWU. For more information, please contact scholarworks@cwu.edu.

DE GRUYTER New Global Stud 2019; 13(1): 35–59

Michelle O'Brien*

Transpacific Resonances and Affiliations in Leanne Dunic's *to Love the Coming End* and Ruth Ozeki's *the Tale for the Time Being*

https://doi.org/10.1515/ngs-2019-0006

Abstract: This article examines methods of tracing affiliations across transpacific critiques through a reading of Leanne Dunic's *To Love the Coming End* and Ruth Ozeki's *The Tale for the Time Being*. The article proposes that, rather than reproducing a nation-bound framing of the 2011 earthquake off the Pacific coast of Tōhoku that envisions it as a solely Japanese crisis, Dunic's and Ozeki's works explore what it would mean to read the earthquake and its aftermath as a transpacific event. It argues that these works facilitate new relations between national cultures and the global, suggesting that, by narrating the earthquake and recovering its transpacific resonances, both works recover and write transcultural links that are obscured in nation-bound narratives of events. By self-reflexively commenting on this process of creative forms of transpacific intimacy, Dunic's and Ozeki's works directly address the potential for literary narratives to implicate individuals from disparate nations in a global, historical, narrative of events

Keywords: Leanne Dunic, Ruth Ozeki, earthquakes, Japan, transpacific literature

Introduction: Cascading Disasters in Japan and Mapping Transpacific Resonances

The March 11th, 2011 earthquake off the Pacific coast of Tōhoku, Japan, remains the most powerful on modern record. The earthquake produced a series of cascading disasters: it triggered a powerful tsunami and precipitated nuclear accidents, most notably the meltdown at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station. In addition to the devastation and loss of life in Japan, these events had immediate global ramifications, from disruptions to stock markets and manufacturing industries, to the less tangible "frustration, heartache, and guilt" experienced by members of the Japanese diaspora as the earthquake "affected their sense of national identity and

***Corresponding author: Michelle O'Brien,** Central Washington University, Ellensburg, WA, USA, E-mail: mics.siobhan@gmail.com

solidarity" (Pourya, Karali, and Ferreira 2017, 556; Takeda 2015, 492). The earthquake and tsunami also produced subtle terrestrial effects, including the flotsam that washed up on the shore of the West Coast of North American from the 1.5 million tons of debris swept into the Pacific. Despite the varying impacts of the earthquake outside Japan, by March 15th, global media coverage, including throughout Asia, waned as coverage increased on the war in Libya ("Effects" 2017, 56; Kowata et al. 2012; Holcomb 2011). Further, as Masami Usui discusses, discourse of these catastrophes in the media and public discourse, including the "place-naming" of the "Great East Japan Earthquake," confined them firmly within Japan in the global imaginary despite their diffuse effects throughout the Pacific (Usui 2015, 93).

Usui also proposes that the emergent body of "3/11 literature" can play a crucial role in recovering what has been evacuated from these early discussions, including an attentiveness to the individual lives affected by disasters and moments of solidarity with other transnational communities (Usui 2015, 93). This article draws from this corpus to explore alternate narrations of the earthquake's resonances throughout the Pacific, as well as narrative methods of tracing transpacific affiliations through *natural* disasters that are read exclusively as *national* disasters. Janet Hoskins and Viet Thanh Nguyen describe that while the idea of the Pacific has become "inseparable from fantasies of economic expansion and domination," transpacific literary critiques can use the transpacific as a "method" of comparison without reproducing a dominant and nationalistic mode of thinking (Hoskins and Nguyen 2014, 2). This article offers one such critique through a reading of Leanne Dunic's novella *To Love the Coming End* and Ruth Ozeki's novel *The Tale for the Time Being*, which reframe the earthquake and its aftermath as a transpacific event. Both texts address the experiences of writers whose preoccupation with the earthquake and tsunami compels them to narrate affiliations between individuals throughout the Pacific, and ultimately recover individual histories lost to expansion in this region. In Dunic's work, a writer's obsession with natural disasters and an anxiety about a "curse of 11" follow them as they struggle to move between Singapore, Japan, and the West Coast of Canada. The writer draws on the larger geological history of the earthquake in their work to uncover relationships between peoples living throughout these sites. In Ozeki's novel, following the tsunami, a novelist named Ruth living in Canada discovers a journal written by a teenager from Japan named Nao. Ozeki's writing draws together the West Coast of Canada and Japan as Ruth works with Nao's diary to co-constitute a narrative that recovers minor stories of those subjected to Pacific imperialist activities. As both writer-characters attempt to understand the effects of the earthquake and tsunami on their lives, they are forced to adopt alternate forms of narration that provoke

them—and their interlocutors—to work through the manifold correspondences between the earthquake and other significant events that may originate from particular nations but resonate throughout the Pacific.

By rewriting these prevailing narratives of the earthquake and tsunami to implicate other nations, sites, and peoples within their histories, these writers, along with their writer-characters, are what Sneja Gunew identifies as mediating figures who “offer a cosmopolitan mediation and translation between the nation-state and the planetary” (Gunew 2017, 15). Such writers, Gunew advances, can “connect the post-nation-state to the global” and address vital interconnections within a “world of global relations where the risks that threaten the planet … cannot be contained by nation-state boundaries” (Gunew 2017, 15). Dunic’s and Ozeki’s works, I propose, facilitate such relations by drawing on the earthquake and tsunami to trace “minor” transnationalisms composed of migrant and minoritized peoples connected across the transpacific (Shih and Lionnet 2005, 3). As Liam O’Loughlin contends, natural disasters can produce cosmopolitanism from both above and below: the former through the global neoliberal management of disasters, and the latter when “previously silenced voices might become audible in the aftermath,” including those peoples “marginalized by nationalist enterprises” who are connected, broadly, by their subjection to dramatic global shifts (O’Loughlin 2017, 92; Gunew 2017, 19). As Dunic’s and Ozeki’s writer-characters explore methods of remaining attentive to these events and recovering connections to individual histories that have been obscured through their nation-bound framing, they address how literary narratives can envision new forms of transpacific intimacy—a necessary undertaking when the rapidly-shifting terrain of the Pacific demands new forms of knowing and reading for transpacific affiliations.

Developing Transpacific Imaginations and Intimacy through Alternate Temporal Geographies

My intervention follows recent discussions in transpacific studies that engage with the Pacific beyond its relationship to neo-imperial dominance and global finance. The Pacific has been closely bound to narratives that render it as a frontier to be dominated, from the imperial imaginaries of the nineteenth century, Japanese and American militarism throughout WWII, Cold War imperialism as the United States expanded its economic and political power throughout Asia

Pacific, the permanent standing of a US army, and, as Bruce Cumings describes, the "reincorporation of Japan into the World imperial system" during the Korean War (Cumings 2010, 188). Discourse of the Pacific has more recently focused on economic competition and cooperation in this region, especially in relation to the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) in 2005 that was "built on previously forged networks of power and domination" that are now codified in formal treaties (Shu and Pease 2016, 6). Transpacific analyses are salient as the Pacific's role in a global network is being rapidly renegotiated and produced as a vital space of capital by nationalistic discourses that further global inequity. Such analyses intervene in these discussions to recover minor migrations, movements, unexpected connections, and histories of those caught between competing forces that have dominated this space. As Lisa Yoneyama proposes, the prefix trans- in a transpacific analytic acknowledges transnational ties alongside historical absences by "captur[ing] the Pacific as a geographic space of movement and interface—of people, capital, cultural products, and labor" that are often obscured in prevailing narratives of the Pacific (Yoneyama 2017, 474). Hoskins and Nguyen similarly discuss the need to reframe national relationships throughout the Pacific Rim in order to embed historical imperial projections of this space within a "network of alternate narratives" of "commerce, conversion, and collaboration" (Hoskins and Nguyen 2014, 2–3; Poppenhagen and Temmen 2017, 151). While approaches like Hoskins and Nguyen's have been critiqued for using "U.S. and its policies in the region … as a focal point" in the emergence of transpacific studies, recent interventions like theirs have opened up significant dialogue (Iacobelli 2015, 2). Their call to locate "alternate narratives" of conversation and collaboration are well addressed by works like Dunic's and Ozeki's that move beyond a focus on the US alone, and both initially center on Canada and Japan, but expand to include both other nations and the oceanic zone of the Pacific itself.[1]

My reading of Dunic's and Ozeki's work is animated by transpacific literary critiques that account for literature's role in envisioning connections between sites and peoples while acknowledging the fraught absences in transpacific histories. I specifically draw on Yunte Huang's development of "transpacific imaginations" which "refer[s] to a host of literary and historical imaginations

---

1 This method of decoupling the transpacific from its dominant associations with competing national interests and emphasizing alternate narratives is indebted to work in Atlantic studies and its focus on oceanic space as a common point of reference. Poppenhagen and Temmen assert that transpacific studies, like Atlantic studies, refocus areas like American studies away from a "continental fixation" and instead toward an "inclusion of oceanic, water, and island spaces" as contested spaces of race and empire (Poppenhagen and Temmen 2017, 153).

that have emerged under the tremendous geopolitical pressure of the Pacific encounters" (Huang 2008, 2). Today's economic, militaristic and political encounters between state powers within the Pacific Rim, Huang reasons, are embedded in the teleology of imperialism that has historically defined knowledge about this region. He thus deploys transpacific imaginations to reimagine the Pacific as a "critical terrain" that serves "both a contact zone between competing geopolitical ambitions and a gap between literature and history that is riddled with distortions, half-truths, longings, and affective burdens never fully resolved in the unevenly temporalized space of the transpacific" (Huang 2008, 2). For literature to engage in the spatial and temporal imaginaries needed to map alternative responses to Pacific expansion, Huang describes the need for a "counterpoetics" that actively resists "master narratives" of the Pacific (Huang 2008, 5). Unlike imperial visions that "always claim some version of historical teleology as their raison d'être," a transpacific counterpoetics draws on minor forms of narration that write against grand narratives of the Pacific, including "correspondences," "fantasies," "anecdotes," and "local histories" (Huang 2008, 4–5).[2] Huang emphasizes that this approach is also one of "acknowledgment"—it recognizes "the epistemological gaps in our knowledge" surrounding the connections between vulnerable people who have always existed within this space to better approach the "conditions of collective responsibility and planetary imagination" (Huang 2008, 10). In effect, if the transpacific is a "space of contradictions" produced by "competing interpretations made from different shores," then Huang's intervention demonstrates how the transpacific can be (re)interpreted through literature as a "stage for the unfolding of world history" by harnessing narrative imaginations that counter the telos of national and imperial histories (Huang 2008, 19, 6, 3).

Dunic's and Ozeki's texts enact this vision of counterpoetics by attending to the heterogeneity of transpacific narratives. These two writers, both part of the Asian diaspora based out of the Canadian Pacific Northwest—an area that still receives significant material traces of the earthquake and tsunami—share an investment in the region's transpacific implications, including the role that narrative imaginaries can play in recuperating minor narratives occluded by dominant histories in the Pacific.[3] Their novels are comparatively productive in contrast with each other for the associations they establish between similar

2 As Tina Y. Chen notes, despite the broad scope of Huang's work, a significant absence in this framework is the inclusion of Native Pacific peoples, which "raises questions about the principals who are fighting to determine the meanings of the Pacific" (Chen 2011, 891–92).

3 Ozeki identifies as half Japanese, half Caucasian-American, while Dunic identifies as mixed-race Chinese and Croatian, and both authors have lived in Japan.

thematics, including Japanese Canadian incarceration during WWII, settler colonialism, the legacy of WWII in the Pacific, Asian diasporas in the postwar era, and reactions to the earthquake and tsunami in Canada. But I also put them into conversation for the distinct narrative methods they provide for envisioning "collective responsibility" (Huang 2008, 10). While Dunic considers how an individual can better understand their own transpacific movements by placing them within their genealogy of Pacific histories, Ozeki focuses on the collective development of a transpacific narrative that produces a sense of accountability for one another. Considering these two models of authorship that share differently mediated relationships to the transpacific is vital, I propose, as it emphasizes the profusion of minor narratives even between texts with similar scopes; it also refuses a singular narrative interpretation of these elements, thus enacting the multiplicity at the heart of transpacific imaginations.

Dunic and Ozeki extend Huang's description of minor forms of narrations by focusing on natural/national disasters and the detritus from these events. That is, the earthquake and the traces of the geological connections between sites it reveals precipitates the writers' investment in other forms of relationality—including between individuals—that are eroded under the teleology Huang identifies. This scope recalls Wai Chee Dimock's theorization of "deep time," which examines literature through non-standard time comprised of "alternate measures … [of] an irregular duration and extension, some extending for thousands of years or thousands of miles, each occasioned by a different tie … each loosening up the chronology and geography of the nation" (Dimock 2009, 4). Dimock's theory draws on literature to look for alternate ways of binding global spaces together, and seek to uncover the layers of relation not entirely predicated on the "temporal and spatial boundaries of the nation-state" (Dimock 2009, 5–6). Although Dimock focuses on how authors and their texts exceed the spatiotemporal categories through which their works are read through, her discussion of narratives that trouble geographical boundaries and produce new "temporal taxonomies" includes texts by authors who intentionally work within such alternate frameworks (Dimock 2001, 756). Literature, Dimock argues, is the ideal "home of nonstandard space and time" that can work against the official borders of the nation and "fixed intervals of the clock" to recover connections between peoples and spaces through idiosyncratic methods (Dimock 2009, 4).[4] At a time when the Pacific has been overdetermined by the aforementioned competing national

4 Pheng Cheah further addresses the global implication of standard time, where the "subordination of all regions of the globe to Greenwich Mean Time as the point zero for the synchronization of clocks is a synecdoche for European colonial domination of the rest of the world because it enables a mapping that places Europe at the world's center" (Cheah 2016, 1).

interests and codified relationships between nation-states, literary deep time offers a conceptual orientation that can recuperate other forms of human connectedness across transpacific space.

Dunic and Ozeki both explore such temporal geographies by using the much longer history of earthquakes and tsunamis as a way of developing an alternate mapping of transpacific space. That is, the writer-characters in their texts draw on these geological events to better apprehend individual vulnerability to violent events, and explore the conditions necessary to remain responsive in the face of disasters that do not seem connected to national or personal affiliations. In doing so, they develop a sense of what I refer to as transpacific intimacy, which follows from Audrey Yue's discussion of diasporic intimacy as a form of affiliation that extends beyond immediate interpersonal relations, and includes bonds to other locales formed as a result of displacement or alienation (Yue 2010, 32). Yue draws on Mountz and Hyman's vital analysis of intimacy as "embodied social relations that include mobility, emotion, materiality, belonging, alienation," which includes "not only those entanglements rooted in the everyday, but also the subtlety of their interconnectedness to everyday intimacies in other places and times" (Yue 2010, 34). This form of intimacy can thus be extended globally and include those whom one may never know, and is instead "a matter of turning into someone else's reality, and risk being changed by that experience" (Yue 2010, 35). I consider how Dunic and Ozeki each envision forms of intimacy between their writer-narrators and others as they trace the nodes of affiliation created through the earthquake's effects. I do not suggest that the events Dunic and Ozeki place in relation are equivalent in terms of the devastation they produce, or that these events produce similar consequences for privileged and especially vulnerable populations whose relationships to upheavals in the Pacific is markedly distinct. Rather, I read these authors as each exploring narrative methods of developing an attentiveness to and investment in lives across the Pacific—an experience that is deeply affective and profoundly changes individual understanding of their proximity to transpacific histories.

To Love the Coming End: Transpacific Connections through Natural Disasters and Reimagining the Self in Transpacific Space

Dunic's *To Love the Coming End* maps transpacific space through a series of vignettes that shift between the unnamed narrator's life in Canada, their work in

Singapore, and their time in Japan after the earthquake. The narrator, an Asian Canadian writer, details their affective responses as they travel between these sites and narrate the histories of these regions and the oceanic zone between through their myriad correspondences. Dunic characterizes the narrator as a writer who would rather work within the "minor" forms of narration that Huang identifies as a way of making connections across the Asian diaspora that they are also a part of. The narrator initially feels "cursed" both by the number 11 and the traumatic events that occur on dates that contain an 11, including the 2011 earthquake, but also by their inability to orient themselves and understand the relationships between these sites, particularly as they are compelled to organize their experiences in relation to well-known events. At the start of the text, they frame their arrival in Singapore against "a series of elevens: 11-11-2011. Slender ones paired with their likeness. Posed together and apart, forever parallel … the curse of 11" (Dunic 2017, 8). Their own sense of existing "forever parallel" to events and never intersecting with them is initially linked to a lover they met in Japan on November 11th, Armistice or Remembrance Day, while undertaking research for their book on the WWII Japanese Kamikaze attack units (Dunic 2017, 16). Much like their relationship to their lover, they feel distanced from these events despite their investment in them. Instead of presenting on their work on WWII, they describe that they would rather "talk about … the Asian predisposition to superstitions … Fate, curses, numbers, death, ghosts—this is what it means to be Asian" (Dunic 2017, 70). This desire to deemphasize more commonplace narratives that they assert renders "reality" as "spectacle" also incites them to map new connections: between the Japanese history they are studying, the Singaporean audience who they feel "will understand" their talk on superstitions, and their background as an Asian person in Canada (Dunic 2017, 70).

Dunic deploys the narrator's authorial research as a frame for their desire to locate alternate ways of attending to other affiliations between peoples and significant events, including how the use of places and dates as metonyms for violent incidents eclipses such affiliations. In a study of the term "9/11," Ariela Freedman proposes that name-date metonymy may help distill traumatic events and retain public memory, but also confines these events to specific periods or sites and evacuates them of their associations to other traumas (Freedman 2015, 182). In their discussion of the curse, the narrator references the limitations of this approach: "9/11 was Chile 1973 before it was NYC. And earlier this year, March 11, 2011 … All those souls. Will Japan ever recover from the curse of eleven? Will we? Is the ill-omened combination of eleven and Japan?" (Dunic 2017, 55). 9/11 in Chile refers to the 1973 Chilean coup d'état led by Augusto Pinochet which led to the death of then-President Salvador Allende; the coup was influenced by US covert

intervention following anxieties about the rise of leftist regimes in Latin America (Kim 2005, 28–9). In her discussion of Chile as the "other 9/11" which "hovers like a specter over the dominant narrative" of 9/11 in America, Patricia Keeton notes that this shared date marked a moment where Americans could potentially envisage their connections to others who suffered similar acts of devastation, and also be reminded of America's involvement in the coup (Keeton 2004, 114–5). But as the name-date 9/11 has instead been firmly bound to the attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon in the United States, the "other 9/11" has been further overshadowed. The narrator's inclusion of it attempts to recuperate this connection, and to find alternate ways of naming and speaking of these events. Their reference to "March 11, 2011"—the date of the earthquake—in this configuration further establishes associations between instances that do not seem apparently connected beyond the devastation they produced, particularly when they are cordoned off by particular dates (9/11) or locations (the Great East Japan earthquake). Crucially, the narrator implicates themselves in this configuration by asking if "we" will recover from the curse of these devastating events without equating their experiences. By having the narrator consider their own relationship to these crises and their potential to produce instances of shared vulnerability, Dunic's writing addresses what Gunew identifies as the need to incorporate the personal, local, and the "everyday" into cosmopolitan narrative imaginaries (Gunew 2017, 34).

In addition to providing the spatial grounding for the sites the narrator seeks to connect through mutual affectability to violent events, the Pacific—its geology and destructive natural disasters specifically—becomes a method in Dunic's writing for the narrator to imagine themselves within an interconnected yet deeply unstable network. In a section set in an unspecified location, the narrator describes that within them they feel a

> gaping crevice. The more I change my environment the more I lose track of myself, yet I traverse. Maybe that's the point. Nothing is anchored. Today is unstable, easy for people and land to split. Chile, Indonesia, New Zealand, Haiti, Japan. Where next? The unsure crust hectors the Pacific Northwest, evidence of instability buried under substrate. A story, mounds. (Dunic 2017, 17)

Here, the "split[ting]" of land extends beyond the boundaries of these nations through the Ring of Fire, the volcanically volatile area of the Pacific that spans from Alaska to the West Coasts of the Americas to Chile, across the ocean to the Philippines, Indonesia and Japan, and down to New Zealand (Rinard Hinga 2015, xvii). Today, this same zone is better associated with the aforementioned historical networks of capital and present "flows of global finance capitalism" including "international shipping lanes, currency exchange rate futures markets" and codified partnerships like the TPP (Poppenhagen 2017, 185). But the

narrator recasts this area through the affectability of this region to inevitable natural disasters. For instance, the "unsure crust" references the Cascadia subduction zone— the splitting of the Juan de Fuca and North American plates in the Pacific; the anticipated earthquake in this area will not only impact North America's Pacific Northwest, but will also displace currents that will affect Japan's coastline (Rinard Hinga 2015, 5). The emphasis on this network as one connected by instability is foundational to the narrator's emerging counterpoetics which suggests that recovering shared subjection to these dramatic shifts is one way to address the "split[ing]" of people.

The narrator's attempts to renarrate this oceanic space is complicated by this "crevice" inside them that reveals their uncertainty within rapidly-changing Pacific spaces and the displacement they experience while travelling. As they "lose track" of themselves, they stop naming where they are located, and feel unable to stabilize their sense of self. As the narrator expresses: "I exist without basic order … I have no references to validate my existence" (Dunic 2017, 33). Dunic's emphasis on displacement aligns with Hoskins and Nguyen call for transpacific interventions to "explore ties between the ethnic homeland, the adopted home of present residence, and … geographically dispersed coalitions of coethnics," while attending to the "vulnerability of transpacific populations to cooptation." (Hoskins and Nguyen 2014, 12). Although the narrator elects to travel, their affective responses recall other instances of displacement experienced by minoritized people traversing the same space, including those from Bangladesh, the Philippines, and Indonesia who arrive in Singapore or the coast of North America as overseas workers. But rather than name these connections explicitly or "co-op" their narratives, Dunic uses the narrator's alienation, their investment in the different "present residence[s]" they travel to, and their place within the Asian diaspora to briefly evoke the lives of those most vulnerable within these transpacific routes.

Dunic centers the work of writing within a narrative that weaves together correspondences between these sites and peoples as a method of making sense of one's place within this complex network and locates "references" that "validate" their existence. The story that "mounds" is precisely the alternate narrative the narrator produces— one that attempts to bring about a different way of making palpable the associations that might amend the "split" between "people and land" that plagues the narrator. In a later vignette again devoid of a particular national context, the narrator describes "excavat[ing] … possibilities— what lies within. I burrow for faults laid in soil. With the mined earth, I sculpt a small mound" (Dunic 2017, 62). As the narrator continues writing, they not only search out these terrestrial faults as a way of envisioning relationships between these spaces, but also considers the "possibilities" of these histories

embedded in the earth. Their focus on natural disasters also reflects a sense of deep time that allows them to better situate themselves within this alternate network: one that deemphasizes prevailing transpacific connections based on global capital, and focuses instead on affiliations that exceed national space and delimitation of events.

While the text largely focuses on connections between transpacific Asian diasporas, Dunic also draws on the trope of natural disasters to address other ways of understanding Pacific space that have been subverted through (settler) colonialism, including Indigenous epistemologies. Given that such epistemologies predate colonialism throughout the Pacific and have long engaged with anti-colonial and -imperial thought, they are, as Yoneyama identifies, vital to transpacific interventions invested in the "exchanges and efforts" that strive to "unravel" the effects of Pacific expansion (Yoneyama 2017, 479). To explore how such ways of knowing can help address obscured histories, Dunic has the narrator seek out physical, sedimented traces of natural disasters. While writing about their time in Canada, the narrator describes a "ghost forest" along the "restless coast" of British Columbia, where "First Nations whisper a tale of devastation on a cold winter night. Cascadia undersea. Land slides. Pachena Bay, no survivors. Below the marsh, dig. A layer of tsunami sand" (Dunic 2017, 56). Pachena Bay was the site of an earthquake whose "tale of devastation" was documented through oral stories of the Huu-ay-aht First Nations peoples indigenous to the region "long before European contact and written records" (Hyndman and Rogers 804). The narrator's discovery of tsunami sand in this vignette is juxtaposed against the next scene: "January 27th, 1700. A mysterious tsunami collides with one thousand kilometres of Honshu" (Dunic 2017, 52). Another earthquake, also registered in Huu-ay-aht oral history, occurred following a tsunami in January of 1700. In addition to these oral records, the reports of an earthquake at the same time in Japan were used to determine the date of the most recent Cascadia great earthquake (Hyndman and Rogers 2010, 805).

The tsunami sand the narrator uncovers thus emphasizes how narratives of tsunamis from Indigenous people in present-day Canada work alongside those from Japan to both register this coastal history and anticipate its recurrence. It also places contemporary North America and Japan in close proximity by revealing that they have always been similarly exposed to such disasters. Reading the 2011 earthquake and tsunami through this association reframes them as similarly transpacific events, and exposes the insufficiency of nation-bound frameworks of accountability when narrating these disasters. The narrator relates this accountability to other impending natural disasters with global repercussions, particularly those shaped by human intervention: "Underestimated, our effect on the slow process of plate tectonics, oceans, atmosphere. Surely the vastness can handle the

burying of what we cannot contain" (Dunic 2017, 88). The oceanic vastness here becomes a repository for histories that have not been "contain[ed]" or addressed in narratives of Pacific space and allows the narrator to envisage what Hoskins and Nguyen describe as "a complex new set of relationships that tie one nation to another" and exceed "nation and citizenship" (Hoskins and Nguyen 2014, 12).

This mapping of connections and the sensitivity to alternate ways of engaging with the transpacific can inform, as Dunic suggests, narratives of other significant and violent events, but with an attentiveness to the minor lives within this interconnected region. The narrator draws on the language of natural disasters as they revisit their writing on Japanese imperialism, but now by addressing the other histories initially excluded from their research presentation on WWII. Rather than return to the more globally recognizable elements of this history, they now approach this topic by considering its effects on individuals during the Japanese Occupation of Singapore. The Japanese Occupation is well remembered in Singapore itself, but as John Kwok notes, it has been largely overlooked outside Southeast Asia in historical narratives of significant Pacific events, which has resulted in the "voices of the locals [being] sidelined, if not ignored" (Kwok 2008, 64). The narrator pursues this history alongside their investment in ghosts and superstitions while in Singapore working on their writing and research. They observe that the city-state is "supposed to be rife with ghosts and I have hardly encountered one. In parts of Singapore there is … an implication of haunting" (Dunic 2017, 32). This haunting initially appears to refer to Singapore's rapid development and the specter of natural disasters as it "grows, a city of glass, as if there is not threat of plates and quakes," but is also tethered to transpacific acts of violence when the narrator imagines seeing a ghost who tells them "S'pore land is scarce, but they should know better than to build on hallowed ground" (Dunic 2017, 44). The "hallowed ground" is revealed to be the ground of those killed during WWII during the Occupation, as the narrator incorporates into their writing Singapore's "purge by purification"— a massacre of Singaporean Chinese by the Japanese (Dunic 2017, 65).

The narrator's investment in the ghost's minor narrative extends beyond their desire to attend to the personal and the specific while recovering transpacific relationships; it also provides an "anchor" for them amidst their feelings of detachment, as they are able to envision a significant bond with the ghost through their mutual feelings of loss. The narrator explains that the ghost ghost "knows how I feel [because] she too longs for loved ones [… and] tells me that the Japanese murdered her father during the war … she doesn't know where they left his body" (Dunic 2017, 55). Although the narrator and the ghost experience two very distinct forms of loss and felt absences, the ghost's intimate knowledge of these events and desire for the traumatic loss of their father to be

addressed works alongside the narrator's need to reconnect with the world around them. Through narrating this crucial moment of vulnerability and intimacy, the narrator illustrates what Rob Wilson describes as a (trans)Pacific imaginary that develops a "situated and contested social fantasy"— one that remains attentive to particular geopolitical contexts while forming new visions of (transpacific) relations (Wilson 2000, 33). The ghost may be symbolic of the histories that haunt the narrator; but this imaginary also produces a narrative turn that is both grounded in a particular event yet exceeds its national associations, as the narrator is able to creatively draw this moment of transpacific intimacy into the broader network they develop in their writing.

The encounters with the ghost returns the narrator to the moment they decided to pursue these alternate points of affiliation. They recall that after hearing about the quake and as Japan was "thrown a new trajectory, painful and unwanted," their immediate reaction was to fly to Japan (Dunic 2017, 56). The quake is again emphasized as a moment of disruption where the nation is not the only frame for analysis, and is only one determinant for how the narrator reads—and eventually writes—Japan after the quake, and how they interpret the "complex endurance of lives ripped by sharp seismic spasms and aqueous assault" that are repeated throughout the transpacific (Dunic 2017, 96). Dunic's writing thus enacts Gunew's evaluation of writers who develop vernaculars that show both a contingent "tribe" alongside "the singularity of the writers or character in a text," and that account for moments that can "disrupt the business as usual of certain forms of globalization" (Gunew 2017, 19, 75). That is, as the narrator draws on the same method of rethinking the temporal and spatial limits of *natural* disasters that they use in their writing when addressing *national* disasters, they offer an alternative narrative less concerned with working within prevailing imperial narratives of this space so much as expressing what new connections might develop, for instance, by considering these events through moments of transpacific intimacy and shared vulnerability.

Collaborative "Tsunami Narratives" and Alternate Pacific Genealogies in *A Tale for the Time Being*

While Dunic's work develops a counterpoetics that uses transpacific geology as a framework for writing relationality between individuals, *A Tale for the Time Being* explores the possibility of individuals co-creating a transpacific narrative— one that uses the alternate measures of time produced within oceanic space to address

the resonances of minor historical narratives in the present. *Tale* start with Ruth—a semi-fictionalized version of Ruth Ozeki, who is also a Japanese Canadian novelist living on Cortes Island off the West Coast of Canada—finding a diary belonging to Naoko/Nao, a Japanese American teenager, along with a Japanese military watch from WWII and a stack of letters. Ruth and her husband, Oliver, speculate if the diary was washed ashore by the 2011 tsunami, and as Emily Jones proposes, the "2011 earthquake looms in the background of Ruth's narrative and is the presumed endpoint of Nao's narrative," which "demonstrate[s]" how such disasters can "cross boundaries and cause ripples through time" (Jones 2017, 104). The text shifts between Nao's first-person perspective focalized through her journal writings as she "speaks" to her yet-unknown interlocutor, Ruth, and Ruth's third-person narrative that explores her attempts to uncover the origins of Nao's journal and Nao's fate while also writing her novel. The novel takes numerous narrative detours, from Nao's early life in California before her family moved to Tokyo, to her bullying at school in Japan, to the life of her Zen Master Grandmother, to an evaluation of quantum physics, to Oliver's musings on humanity's effects on the earth. I focus in particular on narrative moments that resist normative approaches to temporality and spatiality as Japan and North America gradually intersect through cascading disasters, as well as on how this intersection results in Nao and Ruth working together to uncover minor narratives related to WWII and informed by their shared ethno-racial identities. *Tale* thus reflects Dimock's use of alternate measure of time to "reconnect" spaces and peoples, including those subjected to past and present logics of Pacific geopolitics (Dimock 2009, 69).

Ozeki relates Ruth's relationship to the diary to her writer's block and inability to complete her novels-in-progress. While the diary is initially a distraction for Ruth, she soon stops forcing herself to write, and becomes both the interlocutor Nao seeks as she addresses the "you" who will read her story, and also a respondent by extending and creatively narrativizing the gaps in Nao's story; though we do not see her write this narrative down until the text's end, Ruth draws on her research and authorial skills while working with the diary. Its presence soon becomes a method of recovering the connection between her minoritized background and its broader history in the Pacific through the alternate narration of Nao's story she produces. The diary washed up on an area of the island known as "Jap Ranch," a location Ruth feels connected to as the ranch was taken by the government from a Japanese family who were incarcerated there during the forcible relocation and detention of Japanese Canadians during WWII, and Ruth's maternal family were also incarcerated (Ozeki 2013b, 32). Despite Oliver and Ruth's belief that the tsunami brought the diary to the ranch, their neighbor Muriel, a retired anthropologist, informs Ruth and Oscar that the diary is

more likely to have come from a cruise ship as not enough time has passed for flotsam to arrive on their island (Ozeki 2013b, 32). But for Ruth, who immediately experiences a deep affective connection to the diary which evokes her familial memories, as well as a "felt sense, murky and emotional, of the writer's presence," Muriel's assertion confounds her inclusion of the diary into her own history. While Ruth expresses that, as a novelist, she "like[s] the tsunami narrative," Muriel argues that "facts are facts" and narrative preferences "shouldn't interfere" with establishing the actual provenance of the object (Ozeki 2013b, 27).

Muriel conveys here a desire to impose order and instantiate a particular academic temporality. But Ruth's interest in pursuing alternate narrative forms that center Nao's felt "presence" rather than Muriel's "facts" results in her co-creating a narrative alongside Nao. For instance, Ruth insists on "pac[ing] herself" so her reading matches the pace of Nao's writing, which allows her to experience the timing of Nao's daily life and more "closely replicate Nao's experience" (Ozeki 2013b, 30). Ruth's decision to live the temporality of Nao's narrative in her own daily life is part of her search for "lost time," the time between Nao's present and Ruth's present when they are each, as Nao imagines, "reach[ing] through time" to interact (Ozeki 2013b, 38). The lost time that they each strive to recover also includes the histories of displacement and violence that shapes their respective backgrounds, and that they will contend with as their narratives intersect. The collaborative method that develops is counterpoetical through its emergence from a minor site of narration like the diary, but it is also closely reflective of Hsiu-chuan Lee's theorization of a "minor cosmopolitics"—the collective "world-making potentials of minoritized individuals"—as the text inserts itself, through Ruth's and Nao's reader-writer relationship, into a "creative world-sharing and world-making process" (Lee 2018, 29–30). Lee proposes that minor cosmopolitics do not "take the world for a spatial given," and instead "subjec[t] the world to an interminable process of flexible geopolitical constitution and temporal reformulation" (Lee 2018, 30). As Ruth and Nao co-create a narrative of the transpacific intersections that connect them, and as they imagine the other into being as part of their respective presents, they frustrate the limits of geopolitical space and time. As such, while Muriel encourages Ruth to follow a particular ontology, Ruth attempts to learn and enact strategies that allow her to better envision the "temporal reformulation" necessary for un- and re-knowing the world.

As Ruth follows this method of tracing the diary's origins through the atemporal "tsunami narrative," the oceanic currents that facilitate the diary's journey also help her imagine other ways of relating to her diasporic background and its intersections with Nao's. Ruth learns from Oliver that the items the tsunami swept out to sea were carried through the Northern Pacific Gyre, which connect Japan

and the West Coast of North America (Ozeki 2013b, 14).[5] Oliver informs Ruth that "Each gyre orbits at its own speed … [and] drift that stays in the orbit of the gyre is considered to be part of the gyre memory. The rate of escape from the gyre determines the half-life of drift" (Ozeki 2013b, 14). The gyres, like Nao's diary itself, offer a different way of thinking about time, as well as about national borders— they operate out of sync from standard ways of measuring time, and bind together these sites perpetually through a series of currents. The gyres also help create a literal space outside the nations through the Great Eastern and Great Western Garbage patches, which initially repulse Ruth as signs of ecological disaster, but, motivated by Nao's investment in rethinking time and global connection, become part of her world-building and her understanding of human relationality (Ozeki 2013b, 36). As Michelle N. Huang proposes, the leitmotif of the garbage patches "demands a transpacific reading," where "focusing on waste draws attention to jettisoned histories of disregard and violent erasure," including "garbage" like Nao's diary as a "metonym for deracinated history" that Ruth seeks to uncover (Huang 2017, 99). The tsunami is also implicated in this other way of thinking about time, as it becomes part of the gyre's "tone"—the length of the gyre's orbit—and is also part of the dispersal of the "gyre memory" by its potential involvement in carrying the diary to Ruth. Ruth incorporates this ecological form of deep time, an alternate way of knowing the Pacific, into the narrative she gradually builds for her eventual reader— and, subsequently, the text's readers— as she realizes the importance of feeling Nao's history in her present, and even eschews interacting with people solely "in real time" (Ozeki 2013b, 95).

Just as Ozeki establishes this method of rethinking transpacific space and temporality through its interconnections, she also provides a schema for interpreting Nao's and Ruth's relationship, and the turn their collaborative narrative takes toward rewriting prevailing narratives of the Pacific that are delimited by national discourses. That is, as Ruth pursues the "tsunami narrative" in the text's narrative present and Nao imagines her reader in the past, they each deploy their alternate sense of temporality to recover a minor narrative of WWII and bring this history to bear on their respective presents. As self-identified members of the Japanese diaspora, Ruth and Nao both experience discrimination: Ruth's through her family's incarceration and awareness of racism against Japanese Canadians more broadly, and Nao through migrating to Japan and feeling like a "poor loser foreign kid" as she cannot speak Japanese adequately, lives in poverty, is brutally bullied, and is neither accepted nor identifies as Japanese (Ozeki 2013b, 35). Their marginality is remediated somewhat through their responses to the narrative of

5 The Northern Pacific Gyre connects parts of Asia to the British Columbian coastline, while the Southern one connects Australia to South America.

Nao's great-uncle Haruki, whom Nao writes about. Haruki is a nineteen-year-old philosophy student drafted into service as a kamikaze pilot after the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, who died in WWII while carrying out an attack on an American warship. Ruth's personal connection to Japan is intensified as she reads and contributes to Nao's narrative of Haruki, but Nao's writing on Haruki is initially marked by significant gaps; the information she knows about him all comes from his mother, her grandmother Jiko. Nao's relationship to Haruki parallels Ruth's own experiences with the diary, as she tries to make sense of and narrate the past in the present when both constantly elude her. While she is drawn to Haruki's story, Nao notes that

> when I sit down to write [the stories], they slip away and become unreal again. The past is weird. I mean, does it really exist? It feels like it exists, but where is it? And if it did exist but doesn't now, then where did it go? (67)

Nao's struggle with the past as both elusive but palpable is influenced by competing national narratives of the war. As someone who strongly identifies with her early life in California, Nao is caught between Japan's and America's interpretations of WWII, where "most Americans think it was all Japan's fault" following the invasion of China to "steal their … natural resources," while many Japanese people, in Nao's estimation, "believe that America started it by making all these unreasonable sanctions against Japan (Ozeki 2013b, 179). Nao description of the war provides context for Haruki's experiences; but the uncritical and rote narration Nao has learned situates nations, not individuals, as actors in this conflict, and at times reproduces what Yoneyama identifies as America's prevailing "good war" narrative that inscribes America's involvement as ultimately beneficial as it helped "rebirth" Japan as a fully modern nation in the post-war era (Yoneyama 2017, 473).

Haruki's story intervenes, here, to provide an alternative to these competing imperial interests that overwrite Nao's understanding of these events by focusing on oceanic space as exposing an alternate narrative. Nao learns from her grandmother that Haruki was also a writer, and that he sent home letters to his mother discussing his feelings about the war: that he "never hated Americans. He hated war. He hated fascism. He hated the government and its bullying politics of imperialism and capitalism and exploitation" (Ozeki 2013b, 244). As Ozeki identifies in an interview, the memory of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and lasting effects of the last war Japan fought were "seared into the Japanese cultural memory" markedly differently than in North America, but this memory risks erasure when nationalistic factions have sought to "rewrite" the history of the war to encourage Japanese expansion (Ozeki 2013a). Ozeki thus

figures Haruki's story as "cultural memory" for Nao as well as Ruth, whose insistent use of "Jap Ranch" as a signifier of WWII's effects on her tiny island is, as Huang identifies, reflective of her desire to keep tangible this racialized history and resist "cultural amnesia" (Huang 2017, 100). Nao eventually believes that she sees Haruki's ghost, which motivates her to reframe her own struggles in Japan in relation to Haruki's his "whispered stories" in his letters (Ozeki 2013b, 164). For Nao, who still identifies strongly as Japanese American and feels alienated in Japan, Haruki's story helps her to locate a different way of thinking about her identity— one that connects her to an anti-imperialist legacy and allows her to understand her relationship to a broader history without remaining caught between two nations.

But it is not until Ruth receives the diary and Haruki's letters that the subversion of his story and the counter it offers to prevailing narratives of the war is fully developed. Ruth locates a separate notebook of Haruki's in the pile of letters and learns from his writings that he intended to scuttle his plane rather than kill anyone for the sake of the "imperial hubris" of war (206). Haruki's decision to refigure this oceanic space from a battlefield into one of resistance also renders his narrative as yet another instance of a transpacific counter-poetics that emerges from an individual's minor narrative. Ruth eventually realizes that Nao would not have known of Haruki's intentions since his notebook was never sent, which, as Guy Beauregard identifies, is another element like the diary that points to "the limits of which lives we, as variously positioned readers, can presume to know" (Beauregard 2015, 100). However, the final piece of Haruki's story is a crucial moment where the novel engages with "histories of dispossession by inventively juxtaposing what appear to be unrelated times and spaces" to again collapse the space between these transpacific sites (Beauregard 2015, 100).

Yet it is not any one of these stories, but rather Ozeki's triangulation of Nao, Ruth, and Haruki and their particular forms of estrangement— Nao's from her life in Japan, Ruth's from the ways of knowing the world imposed on her, and Haruki from national ideologies—that establishes the novel's method of addressing the violent conflicts that shape the "master narratives" of the Pacific by centering these correspondences between individual lives. That Haruki's anti-war narrative arrives on a ranch formerly owned by a family who was interned, is recovered by a Japanese American girl invested in this untold WWII narrative, and is completed by a descendent of internees connects these instances of violence through a collaborative minor cosmopolitics. As these writers work asynchronously but together to recover and narrate these minor histories, they recall Gunew's identification of the potential for writers who are attuned to and

“nurture” their sense of cultural estrangement to locate alternate ways of narrating planetary connections (Gunew 2017, 58).[6]

Following this powerful moment of connection, Ozeki’s return to the earthquake and tsunami juxtaposes this collaborative transpacific narration against the limitations of spatial- or temporal-bound histories. Despite Ruth’s early attempts to read Nao’s journal without following particular organizational principles, a growing desire to verify the facts of Nao’s story lead to the narrative eluding her altogether and intensify her struggles to write. She discovers that the last section of Nao’s diary, which was formerly complete, is blank, and Oliver suggests that she should stop researching for additional context if her pursuits are all vanishing (Ozeki 2013b, 216, 376). The implication of the missing words becomes apparent following a decontextualized section on the televised devastation of the tsunami narrated by neither Ruth nor Nao. Ozeki again refers to the circulating currents of the gyre in this section, but to address the circulation of information, and the world outside Japan forgetting about the “cascading disasters” of the earthquake, tsunami, and meltdown of the Fukushima nuclear reactors (Ozeki 2013b, 76). Following a scene on the television with a man who lost his family stating that if he can “just find something” that belonged to his daughter that he can “rest [his] mind and leave this place,” the narrator notes that the survivors

> were speaking to us across time, but we didn’t listen. Does the half-life of information correlate with the decay of our attention? Is the Internet a kind of temporal gyre, sucking up stories … into its orbit? What is its gyre memory? … The tidal wave, observed, collapses into tiny particles, each one containing a story. (Ozeki 2013b, 77)

Ruth’s own failed Internet searches for information about Nao and her family members are part of circulation of knowledge through this gyre that, by centring only those parts of an individual’s story that are verifiable, leads to a “decay of our attention,” to their broader implications.

Ozeki suggests that this limitation and inability to “listen” for the reverberations of the cascading disasters across the Pacific also includes the meltdown at Fukushima Daiichi; the colloquial moniker “Fukushima,” as Emily Jones notes, elides “the geological and focus[es] on the anthropogenic facets of the disaster” and erodes its global effects (93).[7] Signs of the transpacific implications of this

6 Gunew here draws on Paul Gilroy’s discussion of the planetary and the potential to become “more reflexively critical of one’s own culture by cultivating an estrangement from within” (Gunew 2017, 109).

7 Beauregarde, citing Muto Ichiyo, helpfully addresses the broader historical implications of this disaster, including the complicity of the USA in supporting Japan’s nuclear development as a way of moving beyond the devastation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and thus its role in the broader post-war nuclear regime (Beauregard 2015, 100).

disaster briefly appear in Ozeki's text, including through a detailed factual section on the meltdown, and through the two proprietors of a sushi restaurant near Ruth who, following the meltdown, cannot return to the their hometown (Ozeki 2013b, 233). But Ozeki does not focus on these more apparent traces of the of the cascading disasters' far-reaching effects; rather, the text explores how having an individual's story come to bear on one's everyday life might also create the necessary conditions for transpacific intimacy— an intimacy that develops a far closer proximity and attentiveness to these events and those affected that goes beyond the distanced televised images or knowledge of someone who lives nearby. An epigraph from Proust immediately preceding the televised tsunami section points toward the relationship between the tsunami, this form of intimacy, and the words that elude Ruth: "In reality, every reader, while he is reading, is the reader of his own self … The reader's recognition in his own self of what the book says is the proof of its truth" (Ozeki 2013b, 74). Instead of producing a series of facts about these connections through research, Ruth decides to follow Oliver's suggestion to stop pursuing facts that elude her. She returns to living Nao's work as part of her present, and mulls over Oliver's assertion that if Nao "stops writing to us, then maybe we stop being, too"— that Ruth herself is being constituted by Nao's writing as much as she constitutes Nao by keeping her narrative tangible in her present (Ozeki 2013b, 217).

Immediately after this decision, Ruth dreams that a Jungle Crow tells her she may be "trying too hard" to find Nao's missing words, which prompt her to "ope[n] the fist of her mind and le[t] go" until she sees herself mirrored as a reflection of Nao, before dream-meeting with Nao's father to stop his death by suicide (Ozeki 2013b, 220).[8] One Ruth awakens, she finds that Nao's diary contains new entries that eventually lead Ruth to a coda of sorts: rather than die in the tsunami, Nao and her father survive, Nao learns the truth about Haruki, and eventually writes a book about her grandmother (Ozeki 2013b, 376). While it is unclear what role Ruth actually plays in Nao's and her father's survival, this particular intersection underscores Ozeki's investment in the potential for writing in particular to develop these moments of intimacy by enabling an imaginative pursuit of an individual's unexpected connection to others. This approach also recalls Rey Chow's description of how entangled relationships can result in the "fuzzing-up of conventional classificatory categories due to the collapse of neatly maintained epistemic borders," and that entanglement, including by being "emotionally tied to a person," necessitates

8 Crucially, it is a Jungle Crow, which Oliver confirms is native to Japan, who leads Ruth through this dream— this crow appears early in the text where Ruth and Oliver live, and Haruki's letters describe his desire to become a crow, which again links the two narratives (Ozeki 2013b, 220).

the "recalculation and redistribution of the normativized intelligibility of the world" (Rey Chow 2012, 12).

To this end, having accepted that she is not simply a reader or researcher of Nao's story, but that they are implicated in one another's narratives, Ruth questions her own agency, including her "empirical experience of herself, as a fully embodied being who persisted in a real world of her remembering" (Ozeki 2013b, 247). While she does not equate her experiences with Nao's, Oliver suggests that as Ruth as Nao imagine one another, they are entangled both on a quantum level and emotionally; this resonates with Ruth, but also prompts her to immediately consider how this would affect those who died in WWII and "vanished' during the earthquake, tsunami, and meltdown, which conveys that Ruth has incorporated these other lives into her sense of entanglement (Ozeki 2013b, 251). As Ruth reckons with these intersections and reworks her "empirical experience" of her individuality and self-determination, she participates in the "fuzzing-up" of the ways of knowing that produce these individual narratives as discrete and isolated from events throughout the Pacific. And by realizing that her life in Canada is still tethered to not only Japan but also numerous spaces within the Pacific that are not nation-bound, including Haruki's crash site, Ruth develops into a writer who can help recover these intersections. The novel concludes with her writing a diary of her own for Nao, her writer's block now addressed, where she imagines Nao's life but states she now believes "not-knowing is the most intimate way" (Ozeki 2013b, 377). By continuing to "not kno[w]" definitively but imagine Nao as part of her life, and by narrating the counterpoetics they worked together to create, Ruth remains attuned to the myriad other histories that intersect with her own—a necessary practice for attending to the numerous minor narratives within past and future disasters in the Pacific.

Conclusion: Thinking beyond the Nation in Transpacific Counterpoetics

In the intervening years since the earthquake and tsunami, the marine debris along the Pacific coast of North America has increased tenfold, and the ADRIFT (Assessing the Debris-Related Impact From Tsunami) program, funded by the Ministry of the Environment of Japan, noted in 2017 that an "unknown proportion" of marine debris—as well as plant and marine life from Japan—"remains afloat in the North Pacific Ocean and may continue to arrive for years to come"

(*The Effects of Marine Debris* 2017, iii). In Japan, over 50,000 people are still living in temporary housing as of 2017, and the nation's "reconstruction and rehabilitation" period is still underway (Thiri 2017, 212). These findings reveal that the extent of the earthquake's effects is yet unknown, and that interventions like Dunic's and Ozeki's remain timely for their focus on narratively addressing the longer history of disasters that connect these sites, and their explorations of how those outside Japan can register such disasters as part of a transpacific network. And while these texts are focalized through narrators not among those most vulnerable to violent events in the Pacific, they expose how responses to such events can open up the "conditions of collective responsibility and planetary imagination" that Huang identifies, and engage new ways of thinking about transpacific accountability and affectability.

Yet Dunic's and Ozeki's texts also develop distinct approaches toward cultivating a sense of transpacific intimacy at a time when Pacific space remains firmly bound to narratives of economic and political competition between nation-states. In Dunic's text, uncovering the much longer relationship between Canada and Japan through natural disasters reframes the narrator's sense of distance and time in the Pacific; their newfound sense of "deep time" provides the necessary grounding for their encounter with another—the ghost—in Singapore, where they do not feel distanced from their history despite the particular time period or nation from which it emerges. Writing in Dunic's text is depicted as unfettered compared to other descriptive means as it allows the narrator to yoke together these disparate times, peoples, and narratives. The vignette style of the text lends itself to this method, where readers must move through decontextualized scenes along with moments that reference particular Pacific histories, and trace correspondences between the narrator's research, their affective experiences as they travel, and their powerful attentiveness to the landscape.

In *Tale*, Ozeki also figures writing as being able to draw together different personal narratives, but unlike Dunic's focus on the individual learning about their connection to transpacific space, Ozeki emphasizes the importance of collaboration. As Nao and Ruth extend Haruki's writings, they not only feel more connected to a history that has informed their lives, but also recover an anti-imperialist story of the Pacific that exceeds national allegiances or boundaries. By approaching Nao's narrative not as found source material, but accepting that it shapes her ways of knowing as a writer, Ruth is able to incorporate into her work an awareness of the many transpacific histories that intersect with her life even as she, unlike Dunic's narrator, does not leave her home. Ozeki's method of thinking through resonances between individuals is distinctly

transpacific, as the maritime space of the Pacific itself and the gyres become crucial to establishing forms of affinity that are not bound by the nation-state.

Through these approaches, Dunic and Ozeki convey the importance of a proliferation of counterpoetics that can imagine alternate ways of relating to destructive events in the Pacific—natural or otherwise—while still remaining attentive to the particular geopolitical conditions that affect individual lives. Further, as they develop different transpacific imaginaries to negotiate particular events, they challenge nationalist boundaries, and make visible the urgency of realizing transpacific interconnections given the assured repetition of similar violent upheavals in the future.

References

Beauregard, Guy. December 2015. "On Not Knowing: A Tale for the Time Being and the Politics of Imagining Lives after March 11." *Canadian Literature* 227: 96–112.

Cheah, Pheng. 2016. *What Is a World?: On Postcolonial Literature as World Literature*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Chen, Tina Y. December 2011. "Emergent Cartographies and the Directions of Asian American Literary Studies." *American Literary History* 23 (4): 885–98.

Chow, Rey. 2012. *Entanglements: Or Transmedial Thinking about Capture*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Cumings, Bruce. 2010. *Dominion from Sea to Sea: Pacific Ascendancy and American Power*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Dimock, Wai-chee. 2001. "Deep Time: American Literature and World History." *American Literary History* 13 (4): 755–75.

Dimock, Wai-chee. 2009. *Through Other Continents: American Literature across Deep Time*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Dunic, Leanne. 2017. *To Love the Coming End*. Toronto: BookThug.

Freedman, Ariela. 2015. "How to Get to 9/11: Teju Cole's Melancholic Fiction." In *Representing 9/11. Trauma, Ideology, and Nationalism in Literature, Film, and Television*, edited by Paul Petrovic, 177–86. Blue Ridge Summit: Rowman & Littlefield Publ.

Gunew, Sneja Marina. 2017. *Post-Multicultural Writers as Neo-Cosmopolitan Mediators*. London: Anthem Press.

Holcomb, Jesse. March 19, 2011. "The Media Careen from Radiation in Japan to War in Libya." *Pew Research Center's Journalism Project* http://www.journalism.org/2011/03/19/pej-news-coverage-index-march-1420-2011/ Accessed July 01, 2018.

Hoskins, Janet, and Viet Thanh Nguyen. 2014. "Transpacific Studies: Critical Perspectives on an Emerging Field." In *Transpacific Studies: Framing an Emerging Field*, edited by Janet Hoskins, and Viet Thanh Nguyen, 1–38. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

Huang, Michelle N. 2017. "Ecologies of Entanglement in the Great Pacific Garbage Patch." *Journal of Asian American Studies* 20 (1): 95–117.

Huang, Yunte. 2008. *Transpacific Imaginations: History, Literature, Counterpoetics*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Hyndman, Roy D., and Garry C. Rogers. 2010. "Great Earthquakes on Canada;S West Coast: A Review." *Canadian Journal of Earth Sciences* 47 (5): 801–20.

Iacobelli, Pedro D. 2015. "Review of *Transpacific Studies: Framing an Emerging Field*." *International Social Science Review* 19 (1): 1–2.

Jones, Emily. 2017. "Writing the Hyper-Disaster: Embodied and Engendered Narrative after Nuclear Disaster." *The Comparatist* 41: 93–117. https://muse.jhu.edu/ (accessed March 1, 2018).

Keeton, Patricia. 2004. "Reevaluating the "Old" Cold War: A Dialectical Reading of Two 9/11 Narratives." *Cinema Journal* 43 (4): 114–21.

Kim, Jaechun. 2005. "Democratic Peace and Covert War: A Case Study of the U.S. Covert War in Chile." *Journal of International and Area Studies* 12 (1): 25–47.

Kowata, Yoko, Masayuki Saito, Atsushi Shibata, Yusuke Sugiuchi, Takanobu Tanaka, Norihiro Tanaka, Yoshiko Nakamura, Tetsuro Nitta, Yoko Hirotsuka, and Ken-ichi Yamada. "The Great East Japan Earthquake in Overseas Media: Survey of Eight News Programs in Seven Countries." NHK Broadcasting Culture Research Institute. September 2012. Accessed June 18, 2018. https://www.nhk.or.jp/bunken/english/reports/pdf/report_12090101-2.pdf.

Kwok, John. 2008. "The Legendary Overseas Chinese Anti-Japanese Army in the Defence of Singapore during the Japanese Invasion of February 1942." In *When the Soldiers Return: November 2007 Conference Proceedings*, edited by Martin Crotty, 63–72. Brisbane: University of Queensland.

Lee, Hsiu-Chuan. 2018. "Sharing Worlds through Words: Minor Cosmopolitics in Ruth Ozekis A Tale for the Time Being." *Ariel: A Review of International English Literature* 49 (1): 27–52.

O'Loughlin, Liam. 2017. "Disaster Cosmopolitanism: Imaginations of Comparison in KamilaShamsie's Burnt Shadows." In *Negative Cosmopolitanism: Cultures and Politics of World Citizenship after Globalization*, edited by Eddy Kent, and Terri Tomsky, 91–104. Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press.

Ozeki, Ruth. "A Conversation With Ruth Ozeki." Interview. Penguin Random House. March 2013a. Accessed June 18, 2018a. https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/312488/a-tale-for-the-time-being-by-ruth-ozeki/9780143124870/readers-guide/.

Ozeki, Ruth L. 2013b. *A Tale for the Time Being*. Edinburgh: Canongate.

Poppenhagen, Nicole. 2017. "Transpacific Life Writing." *A/B: Auto/Biography Studies* 32 (2): 183–85.

Poppenhagen, Nicole, and Jens Temmen. November 20, 2017. "Across Currents: Connections between Atlantic and (Trans)Pacific Studies." *Atlantic Studies* 15 (2): 149–59.

Pourya, Valizadeh, Berna Karali, and Susana Ferreira. 2017. "Ripple Effects of the 2011 Japan Earthquake on International Stock Markets." *Research in International Business and Finance* 41: 556–76.

Rinard Hinga, Bethany D. 2015. *Ring of Fire: An Encyclopedia of the Pacific Rim's Earthquakes, Tsunamis, and Volcanoes*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO.

Shih, Shu-mei, and Francoise Lionnet. 2005. "Introduction: Thinking through the Minor, Transnationally." In *Minor Transnationalism*, edited by Shu-mei Shih, and Francoise Lionnet, 1–23. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Shu, Yuan, and Donald E. Pease. 2016. "Introduction: Transnational American Studies and the Transpacific Imaginary." In *American Studies as Transnational Practice: Turning toward the Transpacific*, edited by Yuan Shu, and Donald E. Pease, 1–35. Hanover, NH: Dartmouth College Press.

Takeda, Atsushi. 2015. "Intensive Transnationalism Amongst Japanese Migrants after the Great East Japan Earthquake: Voices from Diasporic Blogs." *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism* 15 (3): 492–507.

The Effects of Marine Debris Caused by the 2011 Tsunami. Report. North Pacific Marine Science Organization. Sidney, BC: PICES, 2017. I–419.

Thiri, May Aye. 2017. "Social Vulnerability and Environmental Migration: The Case of Miyagi Prefecture after the Great East Japan Earthquake." *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction* 25: 212–26.

Usui, Masami. 2015. "The Waves of Words: Literature of 3/11 in and around Ruth Ozekis A Tale of the Time Being." *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 208: 91–95.

Wilson, Rob. 2000. *Reimagining the American Pacific: From South Pacific to Bamboo Ridge and Beyond*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Yoneyama, Lisa. 2017. "Toward a Decolonial Genealogy of the Transpacific." *American Quarterly* 69 (3): 471–82.

Yue, Audrey. 2010. *Ann Hui's Song of the Exile*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.