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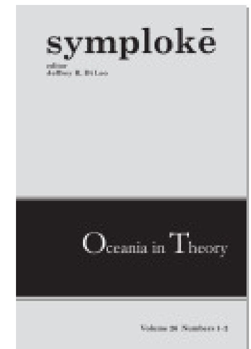

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Sudesh Mishra

This paper is concerned not with the work of memory, but with rememory, which alters the order of "looking at" while "looking through" some aspect of the same event. Rememory pertains to a variant memory of the past and opens up a vista into a variant memory of the future. The neologism "rememory" was originally coined by Toni Morrison in the novel, *Beloved*, to refer to any memory persisting in some guise or form, yet existing ontologically outside the subject within whom it is invested (1988, 35-6). For Morrison's character, Seth, the picture of a place exists as a memorized facticity even when the material place ceases to exist:

> I was talking about time. It's so hard for me to believe in it. Some things go. Pass on. Some things just stay. I used to think it was my rememory. You know. Some things you forget. Other things you never do. But it's not. Places, places are still there. If a house burns down, it's gone, but the place—the picture of it—stays, and not just in my rememory, but out there, in the world. What I remember is a picture floating around out there outside my head. I mean, even if I don't think it, even if I die, the picture of what I did, or knew, or saw is still out there. Right in the place where it happened. (35-6)

Rememory, for Morrison, may be intersubjective as well as intergenerational vis-à-vis an event. My definition of rememory augments this insight to incorporate forms of radical revisioning, where memory presents an event in a new guise or form as a consequence of a change in perspective due to a particular historical dynamic. Epeli Hau'ofa and Futa Helu have left behind some revolutionary acts of rememory. This paper attempts to speak to their work in relation to sea-oriented conceptions of spatiality and architecture in Oceania. It also attempts to discuss rememory as it pertains to dominant forms of recorded historical memory where the foregrounding of certain events and ethnicities entails the footnoting of others. So, for instance, the history of Fiji in the late nineteenth century is frequently divided into two distinct accounts—one of iTaukei Fijians as the immobilized subjects of Governor Arthur Gordon's native tax policy, and another of indentured mobility as a strictly Indian affair. Any exception that does not conform to

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these dominant histories—such as that of the five iTaukei men who sailed with the first batch of Indian coolies on the *Leonidas*—comprises a curiosity to be duly noted and swiftly forgotten. The paper proceeds to rememorize Pacific Islander contributions to the project of modernity by examining the input of Tahitian labour, intellectual and physical, as well as material cultures, in the production of the first printed books in Oceania. It dwells, in conclusion, on the species-wide failure at rememory in the disremembering of zoē, and consequently of other planetary forms of vital life, because of a compulsive fixation on bios; on the current writer's want of rememory when analyzing typhoons in the fiction of Joseph Conrad; and on the strategic disremembering, by various interested parties, of the events surrounding the wreck of the coolie-ship, *Syria*, in 1884, resulting in a rememory of the past as well as the future.

Event; Metaphor; Hau'ofa

First, however, an axiom: there is no memory without an event and no event without a memory. An event, in order to be an event, has to be memorized and the act of memorization is always generative of an event. The memory of an event or the event of a memory involves some form of mediation because the work of memory contains narrative dimensions, elements of textual representation, predicated on the time, context, and subject of its manifestation. These representational elements do not combine in a continuous or sequential manner, but are manifested episodically, arbitrarily and even metonymically. Memory is a textual-imagistic device through which an event may be grasped, but never as it happened in its pure form, that is, as an unintelligible happening on some spatio-temporal horizon, prior to any act of capture in the twinned actions of remembering and forgetting. Pure events, as shown by Gilles Deleuze, elude the present since they cannot abide the distinction between the past and the future (2004, 3). Lewis Carroll's Alice, Deleuze contends, grows as she shrinks because "becoming" eludes the time of the present. Pure events move in both directions and orbits, making of the present a void. The events captured by memory are never pure events in that they are *extracted* from the unintelligible happening, and so made intelligible, but memory itself has the characteristic of a "becoming" in that it evades the present by getting ahead of itself or by lagging behind. Memory is therefore never in the present, although the events manifested in it can never be pure events because of their intelligibility. It is certain that an act of memory, where an event is manifested, involves the forgetting of manifold potential vistas, avenues and perspectives for capturing the event. An event is always extracted from such an overdetermined situation. Forgetting, thus, constitutes the temporary renouncement of these potentialities and sometimes, as in psychoanalysis,

their active and violent repression. Repression is predicated on the detour-delay and eventual surreptitious return of the repressed (de Certeau 1995, 3-4). There is, however, no question of an absolute erasure.

It is possible to make a correlation between memory and metaphor at this juncture. Shahid Amin has argued that an event, while possessing a precise chronology, may not be time-bound because of the metaphorical law of accretion whereby it takes on significances outside…[its] time-frame" (Amin 1996, 3). Memory, in other words, is infused with metaphorical accretions, and the memorized event, although it may have a definite chronology, cannot simply circumvent them. All such metaphorical accretions testify to the temporal dynamic of admission and ostracism. What is remembered and disremembered about an event, thereby constituting it anew, depends on this two-way interplay. While acts of memory elude the present, they are simultaneously past- and future-oriented, shuttling between the archaic and the advanced. Memory is consequently retrospective as well as prospective. The co-presence of the synchronous and the non-synchronous serves to empty out the present in that the former is the future of the latter's past. Growth-determined forms of surplus accumulation have taught us, for instance, that some entities (and these may be territories or suburbs, life-worlds or practices) are the past of another's future; and dominant forms of memory feature saliently in this dynamic predicated on evading the present. So value-attribution, and by extension the power of assigning or withholding eventfulness, is a critical aspect in the work of memory.

Northern growth-oriented paradigms have bestowed on Oceanic islanders a memory of miniscule islands in the sea situated in the past of modernity's future. Epeli Hau'ofa's work of rememory whereby little islands in the sea turn into a large sea of interlinked islands affords valuable insight into how indigenous agency may recast memory in a strikingly different light (Hau'ofa 2008, 27-40). Craig Perez's rememory of Hau'ofa's rememory further complicates matters. In a recent paper, Loveday Why has discussed how Perez's poetry, in its alertness to industrial contamination on a planetary scale, reconfigures our sea of islands as "our sea of plastic" (Why 2017). Rememory, in any event, alters the order of "looking at" something while "looking through" another aspect of the same thing. It is profoundly concerned with such permutations in the eye of perspective. In contrast to the evolutionary, linear, and teleological time of capitalism, Hau'ofa argues that Oceanic memory is informed by deep ecological time. This memory, he points out, conceives of the future as behind the past which, in turn, is ahead of us:

> What is behind us cannot be seen and is liable to be forgotten readily. What is ahead of us cannot be forgotten so readily or ignored, for it is in the front of our minds' eyes, always reminding us of its presence. Since the past is alive in us, the dead are alive—we are our history. (2008, 67)

The upending of the sequential logic of the past and the future is potentially revolutionary in that the past, the archaic, is our future and the future, the advanced, is our past. Thus progressive time may become regressive and regressive time may turn out to be innovatively progressive. In the anthropogenic age of climate change the archaic and the non-synchronous in the form of indigenous ecological practices (such as the Fijian tabu or periodic ban on extractive practices) may link up with synchronous scientific knowledges to open up a future impeded by the long epoch of surplus accumulation (Mishra 2017b, 42-57). Many iTaukei coastal communities, in fact, have been drawing on scientific knowledge to revive customary practices, thereby engendering innovative archaisms in a bid to reverse modernity's assault on food sources and ecological life-worlds. The villagers of Ucunivanua have achieved notable success in reversing the steady decline in the population of the kaikoso clam. Imposing a three-year tabu on the harvesting of the kaikoso, they obtained assistance from scientists at my university, The University of the South Pacific, who taught them how to monitor and statistically-sample the clam population in the region. Their success in increasing the clam size and population led other villages in the area to resurrect the practice: "Sawa villagers, for example, imposed a *tabu* on a mangrove island. By counting the "active" holes in the mangroves, they found that the numbers of the mangrove lobster *Thalassina anomala* increased by roughly 250 percent annually, with a spillover effect of roughly 120 percent outside the *tabu* area" (Aalbersberg, Tawake, and Parras 2005, 146). The authors of the report proceed to cite the case of Nacamaki village on the island of Gau where "one year after creating a *tabu* area the community harvested approximately eight tons of their food totem, the rabbitfish, in one week," provoking one elderly woman to declare that "our ancestors have released the blessing to us by reviving this tradition" (146). The archaic, in a nutshell, presents itself as being in advance of the modern in the desolating time of surplus accumulation. The work of rememory recasts our relationship to the past and the future whereby the former radically assumes the advanced value of the latter.

The Leonidas *Fijians*

It is worth noting that acts of forgetting are not simply concerned with the absence, destruction or omission of records. Chronicled events are also subject to acts of forgetting because they fail the test of a major event capable of passing into popular memory. Even though, for instance, K. L. Gillion tersely records the presence of the five iTaukei topazes on the *Leonidas* which shipped the first batch of indentured coolies from Calcutta to Fiji in 1879, they were swiftly disremembered by history (1962, 64). The reason was twofold. First, they did not fit into the major story of late nineteenth century Fijians as the sheltered and non-itinerant subjects of Governor Gordon's

native policy informed, as it was, by gradualist philosophy and crop-based forms of taxation. Second, they did not conform to the dominant account of indenture as an exclusively Indian affair. The men straddled both, but sat inside neither of these histories as they formed exceptions to the narrative norm. Thus, as exceptions, they featured simultaneously inside and outside the two major historical accounts. It fell upon this author to recover the traces of their presence from the archives, thereby resurrecting a memory that departed from the two distinct accounts of history while, at the same time, contributing to the collapse of the distinction (Mishra 2014, 283-300). The work of rememory also served as a metaphor for imagining a possible future. In his discussion of my essay, Subramani points out that "[t]he ship has always been a strong metaphor for the state; here it is a metaphor for solidarity and the beginning of the 'nation' to be" (2016, 18).

Modernity and the Printing Press

Rememory is, of course, pivotal to the work of looking at southern contributions while looking through dominant Eurocentric and northern accounts of modernity. The case of the introduction of the printing press to Oceania is exemplary. Careful study shows that there was considerable cultural and material dialogism as well as hybridity in the early encounter between printer-preachers and indigenous islanders in relation to the imported technology of the printing press. While the first book in an indigenous language of Oceania was published in London in 1810, the first printing press was dispatched by the London Missionary Society to Tahiti and reached Moorea (or Eimeo as it was then known) in 1817 (Lingenfelter 1967, 3-4). It was accompanied by William Ellis, a young printer and missionary. If printing technology was unilaterally introduced to the islands from Europe, the process involved in the production of the region's first books was a multi-pronged affair involving the material, physical, cultural, and symbolic input of the indigenous population. Richard Lingenfelter, for instance, reports that the printing ensemble was conveyed to the village of Afareaitu on nine canoes, that the building erected to house the press employed indigenous workers and had basalt floors consisting of blocks appropriated from a ruined Polynesian temple, and that King Pomare employed the composing stick to set the types for the alphabet of the spelling book and, later, turned out the first printed sheet to the wonder of his community (5-8). Gradually, as we reassemble the history of the printing press in Oceania, the picture emerges of a dialogically situated modernity where books, whether concerned with the scriptures or with local laws and hymns, are co-produced with the input of indigenous Tahitians (22-23). We learn that two local printers worked on the production of the second book and that King Pomare, according to Henry Nott's own testament, collaborated with him in preparing the gospel of Luke (11): "Mr. Nott stated that he had been greatly aided by Pomare in making

that version, the King being better acquainted in the Tahitian language, and its capabilities, than most of his subjects" (Lovett 1899, 234). When not transfixed by the work of mechanical reproduction, the Tahitians contributed their labour power, their linguistic expertise, and indigenous material to the creation of the books. Tahitian men were assigned the task of working the press while the women are "folding and sewing and…beating up tapa cloth to make boards for the binding" (Lingenfelter 1967, 15). It is in the reproduction of the 3000 copies of *Te Evanelia na Luka* [The Gospel of Luke] that we witness the emergence of a modernity peculiar to Oceania. Barring a few leather-bound copies gifted to the royalty, Ellis recounts how he had to rely on indigenous resources to produce the books:

> a large quantity of native cloth, made with the bark of a tree, was purchased, and females employed to beat a number of layers or folds together, usually from seven to ten. These were afterwards submitted to the action of a powerful upright screw-press, and when gradually dried, formed a good stiff paste-board. For their covers, the few sheep-skins brought from England were cut into slips for the backs and corners, and a bundle of old newspapers dyed, for covers to the sides. In staining these papers, they were covered with the juice of the stem of the mountain plantain, or fei,…imparting to the sheet, when dried in the sun, a rich glossy purple colour, which remained as long as the paper lasted. (Ellis as qtd. in Lingenfelter 1967, 16-17)

This form of situated modernity is the outcome of a hybrid encounter between western technology (printing press), dialogic knowledge production (Pomare and Nott), Polynesian labour (male and female), imported resources (sheep-skins and newspapers), indigenous material cultures (tapa cloth drawn from the mulberry tree) and localized dyeing traditions (fei sap). It is perhaps fitting that each copy of this product of a singular modernity is exchanged for commercially valuable coconut oil, thereby entering the commodity form of a general modernity (Harding and Kroepelien 1950, 30).

Zoē in the Age of the Anthropocene

The next example of rememory draws on Shahid Amin's valuable insight that an event may not be strictly time-bound because the work of memory includes the attribution of new material to the remembered event. There are many instances where an event that occurred in the past has been subject to a different form of remembering because of the new knowledge that has been brought to bear upon it. In his magisterial paper, "The Climate of History: Four Theses," Dipesh Chakrabarty argues that, in the light of the discoveries by climate science and scientists, it is no longer possible to sequester human history from natural history. History has classically concerned human

actors, actions, political economies, and institutions with no regard for nature because humans did not have the capacity to be geological agents. The recent explosion in climate science which attributes global warming to human activity since around the time of the industrial revolution has compelled us to remember this past differently. We did not know this until recently, but for close to the past 300 years human beings have been geophysical agents whose industrial activities have impinged directly, and continue to do so, on the planet's climatic behavior (Chakrabarty 2009, 197-222). Our rememory of this past which impinges on an uncertain future has now been given a name and a period—The Anthropocene, circa 1750 onwards. The collapse of the boundary between the shallow duration of human history (of around ten thousand years) and the deep duration of natural history spells the end of a memory derived from an anthropocentric focus on humanity's bios (or biopolitical existence) at the expense of an interspecies contract at the level of zoē or vital life in general. If bare life (zoē) is included in the biopolitical realm (or bios) only in the form of an exclusion in that it is an exceptionality (Agamben 1998, 1-12), what is required is an end to this bios which posits zoē as the state of an expendable animal exceptionality. Any concept of "cross-species memory," moreover, has to be predicated on humankind situating itself within the memory of the other by forgetting the hubris attendant on conceiving of itself as bios. It is certain that non-human animals have some capacity for recognition, and therefore memory, in that dogs and cats re-cognize their keepers when they return home from work. The science of memory has advanced to the point that it is now possible to understand that "different species under different conditions encode time in different ways, some showing stronger parallels to human EM [Episodic Memory] and some not" (Templer and Hamilton 2013, 4). So while the memory of honeybees is subject to circadian rhythms, the memory of rats are more likely to be dictated by elapsed time (4). Other species, such as black-capped chickadees, western scrub jays and squirrel monkeys rely on "prospective memory" which concerns "the encoding, retention, and retrieval of an intended future action, as when we remember to buy milk on the way home" (4):

> Black-capped chickadees and western scrub jays selectively chose which foods to cache so as to have access to foods that will address anticipated motivational states, even when currently satiated on that particular food. In a related task squirrel monkeys…altered behavior in anticipation of future thirst. (4)

Non-human forms of memory, or the liberation of vital life from the penitentiary of bios, may teach us to evolve a zoē-oriented intersubjectivity with life in general. For Rosi Braidotti, this would entail the espousal of a posthuman subject "whose relational capacity is not confined within the human species but includes nonanthropomorphic elements" (2017, 87). She observes that "[z]oē-centered egalitarianism, the nonhuman, vital force of life, is the transversal entity that allows us to think across previously

segregated species, categories, and domains" (87). This would doubtless include plant-life since we are obliged to ponder what their growth rings might suggest about the long term memory of trees. A planetary form of integrated remembering would, in any event, entail the forgetting of bios in its present anthropocentric form.

Conrad and the Athropogenic Typhoon

It is evident that any act of critical rememory will also have to take stock of the Age of the Anthropocene. How are we to critically reevaluate the seafaring yarns of Joseph Conrad, for instance, in which typhoons and cyclones are crucial obstacles to the project of surplus accumulation? In a recent paper the present author discussed how, for Conrad, elemental furies conjoined forces with lumpen disruptors to imperil the classed social relations of officer and crew driving a ship to a port in the project of surplus accumulation. Whenever there is a crisis to the social relations on board the ship of capital, Conrad swiftly and anachronistically supplies a redeeming idea which defies supplementation, and so serves as a virtuous self-signifying abstraction sustaining the classed relations, in order to ride out the crisis:

> In Conrad's imagination, the system of surplus accumulation faces a crisis whenever its vehicular instrument is exposed to the aleatory violence of gales, high seas and typhoons. Yet elemental energies are not seen to possess destructive design or pernicious intentionality. Rather, they put on trial the social relations on board ships by stressing the lumpen type's failure to live up to the redeeming idea that underpins the project of modernity. (Mishra 2017a, 95)

This comment would have been reasonably accurate some decades previously, but it was made in 2016 and completely skirted an emergent scientific memory of the Anthropocene. Conrad, we know, was writing in the era of aggressive imperialism and global trade in industrial commodities. Climate change and global warming were already factors, but the science was not there to bring that knowledge to light. Recent scientific studies covering a period of three decades have shown how increases in sea surface temperature, attributed to global warming, have raised the intensity and, in some regions, the frequency of tropical cyclones (Webster 2005; Holland, Curry and Chang 2005; Trenberth 2005; Emmanuel 2005; Knutson et.al 2010). The above account of Conrad was, in retrospect, unsatisfactory precisely because it failed to perform the work of rememory. What would the work of rememory do to the above analysis? First, it would involve the retraction of the attribution of "aleatory" or random violence to simple nature since randomness and chance in climatic systems cannot be sequestered from human calculation in the age of the Anthropocene. Second, there can no

longer be an easy disavowal of the destructive intentionality of nature since it cannot be decoupled from economic modes of human intentionality that have interfered with natural systems. The typhoon in Conrad may even be an auto-immune agent in that it lays siege to the system of surplus accumulation which, under the compulsion of the death drive, generates it. Similarly, the lumpen's reactionary spite which is seen as analogous to the typhoon is not outside the social relations of capital, but rather its byproduct. Given that we have become geophysical agents, the typhoon is personified energy in a very precise non-figurative sense. Just as the sea is now in some measure plastic, the typhoon is now in some measure human.

Futa Helu and the Fale Faka-Manuka

In February 2016, Cyclone Winston made landfall in Fiji, completely devastating several villages as it cut loose roughly from the east to north. A vast majority of the houses in these villages were built with imported materials (concrete blocks and corrugated iron roofing) and mimicked simple western designs. They were more durable than the traditional bure (in that they did not need to be constantly re-braided and re-thatched), but they were not designed with reference to tropical climate and weather systems. It is in this context that a rememory of Futa Helu's rememory of the fale faka-manuka is instructive. So, let us say, a meta-rememory. In an essay entitled "Aspects of Tongan Material Culture" published in 1999, Helu discusses the fabulous origins of the Tongan fale and its architectural propriety in relation to climate patterns in the tropics. He observes that the design of the fale made its way to Tonga from Samoa where it was known as fale-a-folau or the house of voyagers. The divine Tangaloa, he points out, instructed the ancestors to upend the hull of the kalia or outrigger canoe to form the roof of the fale which served as "the independent variable to which a floor had to be adjusted" (1999, 319). Thus from the outset, he insinuates, the designers of the fale drew on naval architectural memory with respect to currents, wind draughts and seasonal temperature variations. They were, in short, thinking of the land as being co-extensive with the sea. The fale, it follows, is a kalia of the land and designed to cope with elemental variations, including seasonal cyclones. Helu notes that the fale's walls and the twinned half-domed roof "are curved at critical points to divert or ease lateral as well as vertical loading" (320). Drawing on the work of the architect Tomui Kaloni, he proceeds to explain in technical detail the structuring principles of the fale. Helu's most important point concerns the traditional roof, which he contends "develops mainly tensile, and to a much lesser…extent compressive stresses" while the "oval drum" of the wall "serves two functions—to place the roof at a higher elevation, as well as minimizing the development of shear stresses or buckling within the roof frame" (322-23). He pays particular attention to a moving part athwart the half-dome sections called the feleano which

functions very much like the steering oar of an outrigger canoe. The moving part "has the effect of unifying all ta (half-dome) action into one which then develops complex load-bearing stresses—cable and twist actions—in addition to being the resisting force to lateral loads on the main central roof section that are all channeled to the ground through the feleano" (323-26). Helu's rememory of the structural principles of Tongan architecture is never simply retrospective: it is prospective as well. Having come to the conclusion that the fale's "instinctive geometry" (324) takes account of external environmental factors, he suggests an intelligent marriage of modern durable materials (such as steel and stilts) with the more sensible aspects of traditional architectural design. In my rememory of Helu's rememory, the fale of the future, if it is to withstand the intensity of anthropogenic cyclones, would be a hybrid affair incorporating modern materials into indigenous design, thereby upsetting the values currently attached to the archaic and the advanced, and crucially opening up combinatory knowledges for survival in the Age of the Anthropocene.

Disremembering the Wreck of the **Syria**

My final example of rememory concerns the recent induction of the children of indentured labourers into the vanua of Noco and Rewa. In a formal ceremony earlier this year, Indo-Fijians hailing from the region were assigned the new identity of "Luvedra na Ratu or children of the Ratu" (*The Fiji Times* 6 May 2017) by the Roko Tui Dreketi. A few months previously the Tui Noco, Ratu Isoa Damudamu, speaking at a centennial conference on the abolition of indenture, recounted his grandfather's memory of the wreck of the ship, *Syria*. Tui Noco referred to the rescue of the capsized immigrants and the burial of the drowned and the dead within the village precinct. He also recalled how "a delegation of descendants arrived at our village in Nabudrau after traditionally searching and trying to traditionally acknowledge and pay tribute to the humanity shown by our ancestors at that time" (*The Fiji Times* 24 March 2017). Tui Noco's account is consistent with the historical chronicle of the wreck as found in Brij Lal's highly-regarded essay, "The Wreck of the *Syria,* 1884" (1979, 26-40). Archival records provide ample evidence of the selfless assistance provided by many indigenous islanders to the rescue effort at the risk of their own lives. In his official report on the operation, the surgeon superintendent, Dr. William McGregor, identifies individuals and parties who behaved with selfless courage in hazardous circumstances, among them members of the native constabulary and a company of iTaukei prisoners who crewed Captain Hedstrom's boat. Individually, he commends the following: an unnamed iTaukei man who carried an injured woman on his back through tumultuous seas; Ratu Joshua, the native sub-inspector of police, who plucked the last man from the shipwreck; Constable Apraim who braved the breakers with "a child in each arm, and the mother on his back;"

Corporal Swani who saved a woman and an infant from being swept out to sea; and the Chief of Nasilai who sent out a royal canoe to help in the rescue effort and whose hospitality to the distressed coolies, in the way of food and shelter, could not be faulted (*The Suva Times* 17 May 1884). Strangely, neither Brij Lal nor Tui Noco comment on the more worrying aspects of Dr. McGregor's report, the latter perhaps because he has no access to the archives. Tui Noco's account is an oral rememory of his grandfather's lived memory, so there is little likelihood of him engaging in suggestio falsi ("misrepresentation committed") or suppressio veri ("representation omitted") (Anderson 1992, 180). Lal's written history, on the other hand, relies exclusively on archival material, including Dr. McGregor's formal dispatch on the unfolding crisis. In short, Lal commits the sin of suppressio veri by omitting recurring details of telling significance in the report. Dr. McGregor notes that, of the three canoes that came out to the wreck from Nasilai, only one belonging to the Chief of Nasilai rendered assistance. The occupants of the other two canoes, he observes, "manifested a callousness that to those who were straining every nerve to save people drowning all around them was exasperating in the extreme." He adds:

> With men, women and children dying helpless before their eyes, with the bodies of the drowned floating all over the reef, and the struggling forms of the feebly living striving in the water for a last chance for life, some five or six of these stalwart Fijians went collecting bundles of blankets, calico cloths, and so on, that they could have stolen just as easily the next day, and would not give up their occupation to aid in the work of humanity. (*The Suva Times*, 17 May 1884)

One of the plunderers, when threatened with violence, eventually came to the aid of a woman and a child, but not the rest.

Dr. McGregor's account is revealing for his utter lack of comprehension at the contrary and calculated actions of these few men in the midst of a terrible tragedy. If the system of indentured servitude was meant to serve the economic calculations of sugarcane planters, this form of material calculation had to be suspended during a time of calamity to give expression to human solidarity, shared empathy, and sacrificial courage—epic virtues all. The men's failure to suspend their material calculation during a tragic crisis clearly confounds and outrages Dr. McGregor. That these indigenous men were not part of the economic calculation of the indentured system, and its contradictory ideology of pan-humanism and instinctive universal ethics, appears not to have been considered. Dr. McGregor points out that these "inhuman wretches" were "supposed to be men of Notho [Noco]" and that they "paid no attention to the signals, and to the frantic appeals for help made to them by the Europeans present" (*The Suva Times*, 17 May 1884). *The Suva Times* of Saturday 7 June 1884 reports that charges were laid against two men from Noco and three from Nasilai for the unlawful possession of property from the wreck of the *Syria*. If the archives are so garrulous

about these infamous characters, why do they not find a place in Bri Lal's detailed history of the wreck or in Tui Noco's rememory of his grandfather's memory? Why, in other words, are they disremembered? It is possible that the actions of these men were treated as unworthy aberrations in a narrative concerned with the many acts of courage, kindness and selflessness variously rewarded by the British Empire. The offenders, on the other hand, were not even worthy of a footnote. Even so, a representation omitted is a misrepresentation committed (Anderson 1992, 180). On reflection, I believe we are dealing in both instances with a rememory directed not at the past, but at the future. There are perhaps only two recorded accounts of indigenous Fijians assisting indentured Indians in the history of the late nineteenth century, the other being the food given to a hungry and suicidal Totaram Sanadhya by four passersby as recorded in "The Story of the Haunted Line" (Sanadhya 1991, 107-112). The case of the *Syria* is doubtless the more powerful and poignant because many in the rescue party were iTaukei men and the rescued coolies were generously billeted by the villagers of Nasilai. Writing in 1979, a period plagued by a constitutionally-sanctioned politics of race, Lal would have been aware of the alternative vista into a possible future opened up by the account of the shipwreck. Whether consciously or otherwise, he takes his cue from Dr. McGregor's epic register, placing stress on the collective heroic endeavour witnessed in the wake of a tragedy. In the coming together of Fijians, Indians, and Europeans, Lal is adumbrating a future community inspired by an example derived from history. If there is a dark side to this history, it has to be omitted. Lal's account of the shipwreck has entered popular memory which involves the selective and ideological disremembering of the historical archive: hence dismemory. Yet, as argued in this paper, an act of dismemory with reference to the past contributes to a rememory of the future. Dismemory and rememory both played a part in the recent social inclusion of the children of indenture into the vanua of Noco and Rewa. What this means with respect to the ethics of reading the archives selectively is a question to which there is perhaps no answer.

In sum, there is no archive, oral or written, capable of attaining the condition of plenitude. All archives are, by definition, partial, fragmentary, and unfinished. Yet, paradoxically, archives are also domains of expansion and proliferation in that material from another time-context might cast the archival fragment in a new light, producing new knowledges that add to the repository. There is no reason, for instance, to dispute Tui Noco's rememory of his grandfather's memory of the shipwreck or that his village is a burial site for some of the drowned coolies; it is quite possible that where the written archive is gruff, the oral archive speaks garrulously. This paper has attempted to build on Amin's insight that events are not strictly time-bound to their chronology; they evade time because whenever there is a metonymic fragment, there is a dynamic of supplementation as the fragment, in the unfolding void of the present, attracts new explanatory signifiers to illuminate the event. The work of rememory is pivotal to this dynamic because

it impinges on the past as well as the future. Acts of rememory allow us to stop thinking of small islands in the sea, of the anachronism of indigenous architecture, of exclusivist ethno-histories, of a monologic modernity and of non-anthropogenic literary typhoons. An act of rememory is also necessary if we are to renounce an anthropocentric fixation on bios while espousing an interspecies commonality at the level of life itself.

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