Epilogue

Mooring the Global Archive has highlighted what kinds of histories can be heard when divergent archival contexts and epistemologies are brought into conversation with one other. Through archival dialogue, for example, we can better understand both the complex factors which drove young Japanese women to travel to Southeast Asia and Australia in the late nineteenth century, and the agendas of the state and non-state actors who attempted to frame those women's voices. We can better picture the often nameless and faceless labourers who powered the coal revolution in East Asia or the sugar revolution in Hawai'i. We have a better sense of why those Japanese who worked overseas did so, and the ways they conceived of the world – in song, in deed, and in their posthumous inscriptions.

These empirical insights in turn offer new historiographical interventions. Most prosaically, although no less important for that, I hope that it will no longer be viable to publish surveys of modern Japan with little more than a passing mention of overseas migration. The histories of Kodama Keijirō, Wakamiya Yaichi, Fuyuki Sakazō, Hasegawa Setsutarō, Hashimoto Usa and even the Matsuura river boatman Kōshichi speak to a different historiographical imagination of Meiji Japan's 'world' than a traditional focus on high diplomacy, trade or elite cultural entanglements. Their mobilities across different bodies of water delineated a set of spaces in and between the archives that offer scholars new ways of thinking about issues of gender, labour, social exclusion, Indigenous rights and resource extraction. For example, I have suggested some ways in which historians might study the economics and politics of settler colonialism far away from the actual site of Indigenous-settler encounters, thereby broadening our designation of 'colonial' archives to include not just the Diplomatic Archives in Tokyo but also haphazardly preserved records in rural Japan. I have pointed out how historians trained in epistemologies derived from nineteenth-century Europe, including in the discipline of history itself, could productively reimagine the 'global' through learning Indigenous epistemologies and languages.

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Indeed, my reading of archival materiality along and against the grain of digitization complements a recent call for 'slow' archival engagement as a way of foregrounding Indigenous understandings of time and space.[1] The identification of new interfaces between 'global' and 'Indigenous' historiographies is, in my view, one of the most exciting trends in contemporary scholarship – as is the possibility for new research questions in global history to emerge from Indigenous Studies methodologies.

While my empirical mooring has limited me to discussing the history primarily of Japanese people on the move, I hope that the arguments in this book can also be adapted to other arenas and other historiographical debates. In particular, I would like to think that this experiment in offering the reader what Marc Bloch called 'the sight of an investigation, with its successes and reverses', begins to shift the burden of investigative proof away from an avoidance of self-reflection towards a greater acknowledgement of authorial metadata in the writing of history.[2] It has long been an article of faith – certainly during my own training in Britain and still in many history departments in the Germanic world – that, in the words of Keith Thomas, '[i]t never helps historians to say too much about their working methods'. Offering an analogy pregnant with meaning from his own illustrious scholarship, Thomas continues: 'For just as the conjuror's magic disappears if the audience knows how the trick is done, so the credibility of scholars can be sharply diminished if readers learn everything about how exactly their books came to be written.'[3] This acceptance that there should be, on the one hand, members of a guilded elite who know each other's tricks and then, on the other, passive consumers of history, reinforces a long-standing epistemological divide – one paralleled in colonial settings – between knowledge producers and knowledge recipients.[4] Partly to encourage more transparent conversations between practitioners of history from diverse knowledge backgrounds, *Mooring the Global Archive* proposes

[1] Kimberly Christen and Jane Anderson, 'Toward Slow Archives', *Archival Science* 19 (2019): 87–116. On how digitization must avoid exacerbating traumas arising from the colonial archive, see Temi Odumosu, 'The Crying Child: On Colonial Archives, Digitization, and Ethics of Care in the Cultural Commons', *Current Anthropology* 61, Supplement 22 (October 2020): 289–302.

[2] On Bloch, see the Preface.

[3] Keith Thomas, 'Working Methods', *London Review of Books* 32, 11 (10 June 2010), available to subscribers on www.lrb.co.uk (last accessed 17 June 2021). Marina Rustow evokes a similar metaphor of performer(s) and audience when she argues (contrary to Thomas) for breaking down the 'fourth wall' between the two: Rustow, *The Lost Archive: Traces of a Caliphate in a Cairo Synagogue* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2020), p. 12.

[4] For one critique of colonial knowledge produced as if to deny positionality, see Chang, *World and All the Things upon It*, especially pp. 103–55.

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the opposite to the conjuror's tricks: the book's gauntlet is for scholars groping their way towards a better understanding of the 'global' in history to prove that *not* discussing their archival methodologies is intellectually defensible. I would prefer for our default mode to be one in which the absence of authorial metadata diminishes scholarly credibility; or, formulated less negatively, for the acknowledged situatedness of our knowledge production to enrichen the potency – even the objectiveness – of our historical analysis.[5] If the investigation is to be in sight, then so should be the sites of investigation.

Throughout *Mooring the Global Archive*, the ship has served as a model for such siting. For a couple of years between 2016 and 2018, as I settled into a new job in Zurich and tried, for the umpteenth time, to work out what this book was actually about, I would pop into the Johann Jacobs Museum and visit the model of the *Yamashiro-maru* for some form of inspiration. But this was also an archival trap of sorts. As I slowly came to realise, the model ship no less than the museum bound me to a set of European epistemologies encompassing the practice of history in particular and the production of scientific knowledge more generally.[6] And the miniature on display drew me all too easily into a set of European literary associations: on the relationship between ships and thought, ships and books, or – closer to home – ships and fools.[7]

Perhaps that particular vessel has sailed its course. Some fifteen years after I first had the idea to write about the *Yamashiro-maru*, it may be time to scrap the metaphor of the ship-shaped archive. For as I finish this project, I find I am gravitating towards a different set of metaphors: a language of *waves*, and how they might speak to the physical materiality and violence of colonial encounters in history;[8] and a language of *shoals*. Indeed, in words which are applicable to what I see as the opportunities

[5] '[I]t is precisely in the politics and epistemology of *partial* perspectives that the possibility of sustained, rational, objective inquiry rests': Haraway, 'Situated Knowledges', p. 584 (emphasis added).

[6] On the historian's insistence that theoretical models must be contingent, and float 'like a ship on the waters of a particular time', see Fernand Braudel, 'Unity and Diversity in the Human Sciences', in *On History*, trans. Sarah Matthews (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980 [1960]), pp. 55–63, here p. 60. On models and practices of natural science in eighteenth-century Britain, see Simon Schaffer, 'Fish and Ships: Models in the Age of Reason', in Soraya De Chadarevian and Nick Hopwood, eds., *Models: The Third Dimension of Science* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004), pp. 71–105.

[7] E.g. Wintroub, *Voyage of Thought*. Cf. also 'Books are the anchors / Left by the ships that rot away': Clive James, *The River in the Sky* (London: Picador, 2018), p. 3; Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, trans. Jonathan Murphy and Jean Khalfa (London: Routledge, 2006 [1961]), pp. 5–10.

[8] Sujit Sivasundaram, *Waves across the South: A New History of Revolution and Empire* (London: William Collins, 2020).

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presented by global history, Tiffany Lethabo King has noted that 'as an in-between, ecotonal, unexpected, and shifting space, the shoal requires new footing, different chords of embodied rhythms, and new conceptual tools to navigate its terrain'.[9] I am interested in the brackishness arising from such unexpected archival spaces, in knowledge stirred and unsettled. In a discipline still belatedly coming to terms with its colonial sites and sights, perhaps these processes of un-settling are what historians should aim for in our analyses of the global and the archival.

[9] Tiffany Lethabo King, *The Black Shoals: Offshore Formations of Black and Native Studies* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2019), p. 4.

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