

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I acknowledge the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation and the Darramuragal people of the Darug Nation, on whose unceded lands this book was crafted. I offer my respects to Gadigal and Darramuragal elders past, present, and emergent, and to their kin—human, vegetal, animal, and elemental. The lands of Gadigal and Darramuragal were taken without consent, treaty, or compensation. They are lands stolen and lands of ongoing Indigenous survivance, resilience, and continuance.

This book has flourished in the nourishing shade of countless precious friends and colleagues. I was first introduced to the complexity of plant-human relations by my postgraduate mentors at the University of Oxford, Laura Rival and Elizabeth Ewart. Six years later, Macquarie University provided me with an intellectually rich environment to explore human-vegetal worlds as a doctoral student. I extend heartfelt gratitude to my supervisors, Eben Kirksey, Jaap Timmer, and Eve Vincent, for their unfailing support throughout my candidature, and for trusting that this project was meaningful and possible. I also thank Payel Ray for her energizing presence and my PhD examiners for their constructive feedback: Nils Bubandt, Michael Scott, and Rupert Stasch.

A three-year postdoctoral research fellowship at the University of Sydney's Department of History allowed me to focus on bringing this book to fruition. I thank in particular my mentor, Warwick Anderson, for his incomparable personal and intellectual support throughout this period, as well as my commentators, Paul Griffiths and Sonja van Wichelen, and the generous participants of a first-book peer-review symposium held in November 2019: Roberto Costa, Ben Robin Dean, Margaret Jolly, Jaya Keaney, Paul-David Lutz, Timothy Neale, Hans Pols, Thom van Dooren, and Christine Winter.

Colleagues from a wide range of disciplines provided critical feedback on the arguments and ideas presented in this book at various guest seminars and conferences. These include presentations at the University of Sydney; Macquarie

University; University of New South Wales; Australian National University; Alfred Deakin Institute; University of Melbourne; Asia Research Institute at Yale–NUS College; Institut des Hautes Etudes pour la Science et la Technologie; Institut International pour les Etudes Comparatives; Centre for International Forestry Research; Australian Anthropological Society; Sydney Pacific Studies Network; Multispecies Justice Collective; American Anthropological Association; Society for Social Studies of Science (4S); Association for Asian Studies; Association for Social Anthropology in Oceania; Asian Studies Association; European Association of Social Anthropologists; Asian Studies Association of Australia; Temporal Belongings Network; Australian Food, Society, and Culture Network; Concordia University; Universidade de Lisboa; University of California, Berkeley; London School of Economics; Universitas Udayana; Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz—Max-Planck-Institut; Carleton University; University of Wisconsin–Madison; Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz; University of Waikato; TBA-21 Academy; and Sydney Festival. I thank the organizers and the participants of these events for their incisive questions and comments.

At the Sydney Southeast Asia Centre, I benefited immensely from the mentorship and advice of Michele Ford as well as fellow early-career researchers and professional staff: Avril Alba, Ariane Defreine, Rosemary Grey, Elizabeth Kramer, Minh Le, Jessica Melvin, Natali Pearson, Josh Stenberg, and Kristy Ward. At the Charles Perkins Centre, I extend my thanks to David Raubheimer and Stephen Simpson. At the University of Sydney's Department of History, I thank in particular Leah Lui-Chivizhe, Frances Clark, James Dunk, Julia Horne, Roy MacLeod, Michael McDonnell, Mark McKenna, and Penny Russell. At the Sydney Environment Institute, I have deeply enjoyed thinking with Eloise Fetterplace, Monica Gagliano, Liberty Lawson, Iain McCalman, Astrida Neimanis, Elspeth Probyn, Killian Quigley, Sue Reid, David Schlosberg, Michelle St Anne, Gemma Viney, Dinesh Wadiwel, Sam Widin, and Genevieve Wright. Danielle Celermajer and Christine Winter—through multiple overlapping crises, we have trodden ancient and new paths together. You taught me to be true to myself and to the many beings entrusted to my heart and pen. You blessed me with the tremor of recognition for a life in so many ways completed by your presence.

Other precious colleagues in this journey include Chris Ballard, Karen Barad, Ruth Barcan, Jennifer Biddle, Marisol de la Cadena, Jennifer Deger, Elizabeth Duncan, Peter Dwyer, Ute Eickelkamp, Stefanie Fishel, Kate Fullagar, Anne Galloway, Shaila Seshia Galvin, Anika Gauja, David Gellner, Radhika Govindrajana, Benjamin Hegarty, Annamarie Jagose, Stuart Kirsch, Emma Kowal,

Tessa Laird, Tess Lea, Fiona McCormack, Debra McDougall, Tanya Murray Li, Deborah Lupton, Kristina Lyons, Monica Minnegal, Ursula Münster, Alyssa Paredes, Jess Pasisi, Robbie Peters, Jemma Purdey, Lisa Stefanoff, Alice Te Punga Somerville, Deborah Thomas, Anna Tsing, Adrian Vickers, Lee Wallace, and Megan Warin. Gratitude also goes to Cory-Alice André-Johnson, Dominic Boyer, Chip Colwell, Keridwen Cornelius, James Faubion, Cymene Howe, Amanda Mascarelli, Danilyn Rutherford, Isabel M. Salovaara, Emily Sekine, and Shelmith Wanjiru from the Society for Cultural Anthropology and the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research.

This research was made possible by a number of generous grants and scholarships from the Australian Ministry of Education and Training (Endeavor International Postgraduate Scholarship 2015–2018), the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research (Dissertation Fieldwork Grant 2015–2016, Engagement Grant 2019, and Post-PhD Research Grant 2019–2020), the Australian Research Council (Discovery Project, “The Promise of Justice,” 2020–2022), the Janet Dora Hine Postdoctoral Fellowship (2019–2022), the Charles Perkins Centre (Postdoctoral Startup Allowance 2019–2022), the University of Sydney’s Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (Faculty Research Support Scheme 2019–2020), the Sydney Southeast Asia Centre (Conference Fund 2019), the Asian Studies Association of Australia (Biennial Conference Postgraduate Award 2017), and Macquarie University (Fieldwork Research Grant 2015–2018).

Ethics approval for the fieldwork upon which this book is based was received from the Macquarie University Human Research Ethics Committee on March 31, 2015 (Reference Number 5201500051). I thank Duke University Press, the Asian Studies Association of Australia, the Australian Anthropological Society, Macquarie University, and members of their respective judging committees, for recognizing the merits of my research with the award of the inaugural Duke University Press Scholars of Color First Book Award 2021, John Legge PhD Thesis Prize 2020, Best PhD Thesis Prize 2019, and Vice-Chancellor’s Commendation 2019, respectively.

A version of chapter 2 appeared in *Anthropology Now* and a version of chapter 4 appeared in *Ethnos*. Modified extracts from articles and essays published in *Art+Australia*, *Cultural Anthropology*, *Environmental Humanities*, *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory*, *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, and *The Living Archive: Extinction Stories from Oceania* have been incorporated in specific sections of the book. I thank these journals for their permission to reprint these materials. I also thank Synergetic Press for allowing me to reprint in modified form sections of “Sago: A Storied Species of West Papua,”

from *The Mind of Plants: Narratives of Vegetal Intelligence* (edited by John C. Ryan, Patricia Vieira, and Monica Gagliano), in chapter 5. At Duke University Press, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to my editor, Ken Wissoker, for his precious mentorship and support throughout our journey together and for helping to bring this book to full fruition. I thank the Duke University Press team for their incredible support, and, particularly, Ryan Kendall for guiding me through the production process. I thank Susan Albury, Brian Ostrander of Westchester Publishing Services, and Nicole Balant for their meticulous copy-editing. Immense gratitude goes also to the two anonymous reviewers of this manuscript for their copious and constructive feedback.

Friends who supported me throughout this journey include Justa Hopma, Lena Nguyen Horneber, Brigitte and Kyomi Mimasu, and Jelle Wouters. Karin Bolender and Laura McLauchlan—my “Grasshawg girls”—helped me grapple with the complexities of multispecies ethnography over countless emails and Skype sessions. Just as important to my thinking were the generous inputs of fellow early-career researchers and Higher Degree Research students, including Matt Barlow, Emile Boulot, Sria Chatterjee, Emily Crawford, Jen Dolin, Zsuzsanna Ihar, Anna-Katharina Laboissière, Daniel Ruiz-Serna, Daniel Tranter, Blanche Verlie, Jamie Wang, and Katie Woolaston. I also thank those friends who helped to disseminate my research findings in international media outlets: Deanna Catto, Liane Colwell, Alexander d’Aiola, Kate Evans, Meri Geraldine, Rebecca Gidley, Amy Gunia, Farid Ibrahim, Sarah Jacob, Hanna Jagtenberg Tom Johnson, Elly Kent, Klas Lundström, Shaheryar Mirza, Fidelis Satriastanti, Sanja Savkić Šebek, Rachel Smolker, Hanne Worsoe, and Yifan Wu.

My access to the field was enabled by the sponsorship of the Merauke Secretariat for Justice and Peace and the Jakarta-based NGO, PUSAKA. From these institutions, I thank, in particular, Anselmus Amo, Emil Ola Kleden, Nicodemus Rumbayan, and Franky Y. L. Samperante for their precious friendship and moral guidance. The topic and location of my doctoral research were significantly inspired by my prior work with the UK-based human-rights NGO Forest Peoples Programme. I extend my heartfelt thanks to the members of this organization, including Patrick Anderson, Tom Griffiths, Louise Henson, Justin Kenrick, Tom Lomax, Julia Overton, Sarah Roberts, and particularly Marcus Colchester, whose deeply reflexive approach to Indigenous advocacy has been a constant source of wisdom and inspiration.

My parents, Jacques and Dominique, have been a source of unfailing patience, love, and encouragement throughout my life and particularly during the compilation of this book. I cannot thank you enough for being who you

are and holding me as you do. None of this would have been possible without you. My brother, Emmanuel, supported me throughout the trials and tribulations of research with his wit, humor, and unspoken care. Your sparkle was a constant guiding light for me. Thank you for keeping me grounded and alight all at once. As for my partner, Jacob, where do I start? More important, may it never end.

In the field, I extend my deepest thanks to the communities of Bayau, Khalaoyam, and Mirav, who hosted me despite the many risks entailed, and without whose cooperation this research would have been impossible. For reasons of safety, I cannot name you all. Indeed, I cannot name you at all. With pseudonyms applying, I extend particular gratitude to Darius and Theo, who taught me how to walk the forest and listen to birds, and to my host sister, Mina, whose incisive reflections on anthropological practice were central to rethinking my encounters with humans and plants. I also thank the children of the Mirav primary school for entrusting me with their stories, drawings, songs, and dreams. As for Gerardus, Gerfacius, Pius, and Rosa, who passed away during my fieldwork, I will always remember you for your immense kindness and spontaneous laughter. Finally, I thank the rivers, soils, wind, and groves of the Upper Bian and the plant companions whose story I have sought to tell in this book. Each has helped me rethink life, and our place within it, in ways that extend far beyond the scope of scholarly practice. All shortcomings in this book are mine.