

is discarded in pursuit of a theoretical position. Hawai'i is an ideal nexus for her argument, but ending at Sea World undercuts Hawai'i's history and complex cultural politics. Desmond's cause and Hawai'i might both have been better served by two books instead of a bifurcated one. As a text about Hawai'i, *Staging Tourism* is still subject to Euro-American, middle-class ethnocentricities easily reframed through other gazes. Where in the "white imaginary" would Desmond fit the Japanese hula craze or Hawai'i tourism's dependence on the Japanese yen? An outsider, Desmond safely sticks to touristic representations. She is aware that a complete picture would require demographics currently unavailable and facility in Hawaiian language. Missing are the perspectives of living performers, many of whom have made the transition from touristic performance to the reclamation of hula as a site of cultural resistance. Other issues not considered are the consumption of Hawai'i by non-whites, and Native Hawaiian diasporic performance.

Despite its limitations, Desmond's exhaustive research is a valuable resource for scholars. Throughout the book she anticipates objections, admits to limitations, and suggests avenues for future research. *Staging Tourism* is an insightful and provocative demonstration of how the various strains of western domination can be mapped over each other, and how the performing body can be read.

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Hembemba: Rivers of the Forest, by Steven Edmund Winduo. Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, and Boroko: Language and Literature Department, University of Papua New Guinea, 2000. ISBN 982-02-0311-2; 124 pages, figures, appendix, glossary. US\$12.00.

Cook Islands. Special Issue of *Mana: A South Pacific Journal of Art and Culture, Language and Literature* (12:2), edited by Jean Tekura Mason and Vaine Rasmussen. Suva: Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific, 2000. ISBN 0379-5268; xviii + 113 pages, figures, photos, glossary. US\$16.00.

From the Spider Bone Diaries: Poems and Songs, by Richard Hamasaki. Honolulu: Noio (Kalamakū Press) 2000. ISBN 0-9623102-9-8; xxii + 119 pages, figures, notes. US\$8.95.

The ancestral voices of rivers petitioned for spiritual possession in Steven Edmund Winduo's second poetry collection, *Hembemba: Rivers of the Forest*, are not those of Langston Hughes, William Butler Yeats, or Muddy Waters. Although these modernist figures do flit in and out of Winduo's English-language poems as mentors, running through the well-wrought book is the quest to speak as Lomo'ha, a spirit voice and heroic quester in Nagum Bokien (his native language and culture). Many of the poems are situated in the river-crossed region of East Sepik Province, Papua New Guinea, where Winduo takes his pride of birth and starts his journey of Pacific crossing, estrangement, and

return. This book is the lyric record of this journey outward, disorientation, and return to the homeland.

The five river poems that structure this collection are written in a large myth-drenched voice full of platitudes, hyperbole, and remonstrance, yet riddled with loss, anxiety, and blockage. Courting whisperings, shadows, and rumbles in “Without a Name,” Winduo wants to let “forefathers’ drums talk / In ancient metaphors.” But this ancestral sublime vision of dark seeing is also connected to an uneasy identification with Third World visions of urban negritude and socialist resistance, nicely conjured up in “Seeds and Roots” as some transnational “dead poets’” community of global belonging:

Somewhere in this world the dead poets
Are feasting over the birth of Lomo’ha
Maybe under the timeless sword of Mao
Beneath the shambles of Berlin Wall
Maybe in the inner cities of America

At times, the Pacific diaspora in Winduo registers loss, death, wound, and betrayal: since his village people “left long ago for other shores” from New Zealand to Minnesota to the afterlife, in “Upon the Shores” the poet wonders, “What is there to return to?” Many poems record this loss of vision and the uneasy fit of the native son returning home to find the mixed blessings of a fractured community and changing place.

Tracking a journey from “Sepik to Mississippi” via river meditations, and making a water-poetry out of flow, loss, and renewal, the poet affirms: “But once this journey is complete / I shall return home to my people / And live in a forest of ancestral place.”

Such security of place is not lastingly evoked, however, and “self-consciousness” more often becomes the “curse” of not belonging to place or home as site of “ancestral words.”

At times to avoid a “society of nightmares” and political failure, on the other hand, the poet keeps moving, letting go, uprooting, “changing address to avoid *wantok*,” meaning that easy talk of Melanesian cultural oneness in a context of social fracturing, urban rage, and modern dispersal (“My Previous Address”). In “My River,” Winduo sees the flowing river as a lasting model for the Melanesian cultural self, but apologizes for his own moving away as if talking to the communal spirit: “I know you are hurt by my move / And see me as a thoughtless person.” The past more often lies “buried in the savanna” as the road leads on from river and forest to urban modernity, money making, corruption, and change (“Long Road”).

Still, in a fine poem like “Mister Out There,” the ancestral uncanniness of dark vision and terror is carried across the Pacific and haunts the urban scene of America and New Zealand: “His shadow looms / I walk in gloom / Wanting to scream / Mister out there maybe roams / Everywhere in this city / Mister out there’s / Shadows are dark spots on the land.”

This local Melanesian scene of global modernity is captured memorably in “Undecided Victims” as an over-packed bus hurtling aimlessly into the future, ripping self and nation apart from place:

I begin this way
Hot sun in Melanesia
Sweating bodies

All packed in a bus
 Travelling anywhere
 Untold sense of direction

Waiting for a bus in the heat
 No one wants to know
 Where this country is heading to
 Arrival of a bus is a mad rush
 Who else is on board?

The last stanza of the poem conjures Winduo's own failure to lead or comprehend this over-stuffed bus of a multilingual country, but finds traces of hope in the sheer movement forward:

A woman bus driver
 Half silence
 Guilty conscience
 My own ignorance
 The history of this country
 Is written down each minute

Far more successful than the mythic poems of river-spirit are the smaller, scaled-back poems written in Tok Pisin (PNG pidgin English) and translation, which give the collection material embodiment, off-key collocation, and wry beauty. These poems are stunning in their pointed efficacy and range, far more haunting than the big mythic voice poems that drive the collection. "Bikman" ("Great Man") offers a cutting satire of a government official wasting national money on his own greed and need. "Wan Satide Apinun" is a wonderful "wantok woman" urban love poem full of mockery, self-buffoonery, and the hunger for bliss.

Among these Tok Pisin poems written in terse Creole English, "Klostu Mi Les" finely captures the loss and agony that drive Winduo across the ocean in a quest to heal the agony of postcolonial and modern nation-making. "Dis-pela wokabout belong me" begins the stanza of the trans-Pacific walkabout,

which reads in (diminished) translation:

This long walk of mine
 Began from a distance
 On the way I met difficulties
 ["planti heavy"]
 My shoulder carried the burden
 My journey to end
 My ancestors' curiosity
 When they first saw the sea

All rivers lead beyond the forest toward Pacific crossings in Winduo, and lead back, fitfully, to register a sense of ancestral connection and the mounting loss of spirit-place as motive for poetry and song. As he writes in "Taim Mi Raun" ("In My Walk"), another poem of diasporic journey from the forests and across oceans, "This search goes beyond my own life." Winduo means this journey of estrangement and return belongs to his ancestral people and their unevenly modernizing nation of forests and rivers.

The journal *Mana* offers a Cook Islands special issue composed of creative writing and art edited by Jean Tekura Mason and Vaine Rasmussen. Offering a potpourri of island song, chant, story, essay, and poem from the year 2000, the editors somewhat blithely aim to reflect "the experience of Cook Islanders as an emigrant, as well as an indigenous people," and to include the more diasporic mix of "Cook Islanders who grew up in New Zealand visiting their home for the first time." If the ingredients are uneven and unranked, the accomplishments are no less so, as multilingual affirmation of place and people rules over any anxiety of utterance or art. Very often Christian and native images collage and fuse in the subjective lyric

brew, as do the naive and more wry or self-conscious.

In “Pasifika Lives On,” Jacqueline Sanderson’s idealized project of enlightenment, “the war-like cries of yesteryear” molt into “calls of welcome,” the Cook Islands becoming “islands of Christian love” and “islands of bronzed people and rich black hair.” More sharply in “Scarface,” Jean Tekura Mason turns a poem written in pious memory of her Māori uncle, disfigured in a car crash, into a protest against urban alcoholism and native blight:

He could have been named for the
hospital—Birkenhead or
Middlemore—
but he could never have been named
Ugly-Because-of-Stupid-Accident-
Caused-by-Too-Much-Alcohol.

In another keen poem by the same Tekura Mason, the blue bountiful Pacific becomes an “angry, black sea” of death and loss journeying between Nukuroa and Akatoka. Radio announcer and high-priest-turned-poet Bobby Turua nicely conjures the goddess Mu, less as an automatic cultural possession than as longing and quest for such native energy: “Mu e! Mu! . . . Images I cannot conjure / Yet I feel your lure.” In “Idolatry,” Turua fuses the love of tiki stone and Tangaroa wood into love of a more recognizably scriptural God: “Above and below / Love is God!”

More given to textual experiment, Audrey Brown colorfully plays with iconography and mythology in her poem “mixed bag of tropical sweets sitting outside the hotel r & r,” mixing cockroaches and prayers. Maringikura Campbell similarly plays with mixed

Cook Island blood and cultures in her poem “Danish Feet,” using cold toes to stand as the incongruous European element aching in the tropics. Other writers juxtapose and install such cultural elements as long mixed and inside, from Jehovah to guavas and governor plums, as brought here, for example, by settler William McBirney in 1908 (see his piously pastoral poem included here, “My Island Home”).

The *Mana* Cook Islands collection offers testimony to a mixed heritage of cultures, languages, and open directions. The dominant tone of this eclectic anthology is lyrical and humorous, more given to fusion and acceptance than to rage or exclusion, more tied to chant and song than to decolonizing critique or polemic. As such, it offers community-building testimony to where this self-governing island stands, some thirty-five years after the post-colonial break with New Zealand and still emerging in the techno-wake of transnational linkages that call the nation back to coexistence more than to the purely native.

Richard Hamasaki has moved from a deeply felt immersion in the 1970s inside the international and Confucian-drenched poetics of modernist scholar-poet Ezra Pound (whom he still evokes as a model for experimental yet didactic verse) to articulate throughout the 1980s and 1990s (via important pan-Pacific mentors like Wayne Westlake, Albert Wendt, Gary Snyder, Albert Saijo, George Helm, Haunani-Kay Trask, and Samuel Kamakau) a more situated engagement with and critical-lyrical reorientation toward writing a Pacific-based orature and Hawaiian place-affiliated poetics.

In some senses, through this passionate immersion in such Asian/Pacific cultural work, Richard Hamasaki has himself become a kind of Ezra Pound for these Asian/Pacific-oriented Pacifics. As a writer and pedagogue rolled into one, he works preaching and teaching in an argumentative poetic mode, urging not so much the will to crude decolonization from the past, as an attentive immersion in (and transfiguration of) these complex global-local-national heritages, genres, and traditions coming down to our present moment from a politics-drenched colonial past. Hawai'i is a distinctive place, and the work that comes out of here (as from other parts of the postcolonial or decolonizing Asia/Pacific) needs to be distinctive in its emergence, forms, and allegiances as well. *From the Spider Bone Diaries: Poems and Songs* (hereafter referred to as *SBD*) deftly records the making of and journey toward such rooted, routed, yet organic work.

SBD records Hamasaki's complex, twenty-five-year-long archive and project in forging Hawaiian-based poetry and poetics, all theorized of a whole yet evolving toward voicing something place-based, musical, and thick-descriptive. It is Hawaiian-based poetry that works at its activist, responsible, exacting, and organic best, pushing in multiple languages and forms, becoming prophetic, enraged, lyrical, and tender by turns.

Hamasaki's poetic project in *SBD*, articulated from inside the sixty-seven poems to the footnotes, silk-screen graphics, and notes in the afterword and bio-sketch, and expressed via the fetching cover of lava/water/bone, is

engaged in a large-scale refiguring of the US political-cultural imagination and what this polity takes to be the nation in these global-local times. *SBD* fits with everything Richard Hamasaki has done, from his Pacific-based and Asian-leaning editorial work on *Seaweeds and Construction*, to his pioneering master's thesis in Pacific studies at the University of Hawai'i, to his recent interview on pidgin poetics in *Hybolic*s with the adventuresome Lee Tonuchi.

These are poems as ethical and political-aesthetic acts, expressing the mazes of lyrical rage and neoliberal bliss we are living through. For readers like myself, *SBD* at times makes poets like William S Merwin (or Garrett Hongo for that matter) look otherworldly, ethereal, bookish, and idealized in their purported lyric and narrative engagement with the poetics and the poetries of Hawai'i, the white mythology of Jack London and Paul Theroux, and the living currents of Asia/Pacific. This difference is all to the good and a reason for such a book to emerge into the light of publishing via another more local and Pacific-based way of circulation, reaching from Native Books to Costco and into Pacific classrooms in high school and college.

To be more specific about individual poems in this "diary" collection of bones, ghosts, hauntings, and spiders, allow me to elaborate a bit more in detail on my readings of the poems. "For He Who Wears the Sea Like a Malo" invokes mentor figures of Oceania, Wayne Westlake and George Helm, as lyricists and cultural activists whose work mattered then and lives on in its "echoing" afterlife here. The

poems give a historical context for such linkages and use apt images to convey this homage. Translation into Rarotongan gives a trans-Pacific linkage and invokes another mentor and ally, the late Kauraka Kauraka of the Cook Islands.

“I Don’t Write No Haiku” resists the banal lyricism of American haiku, plays with and deforms the prosodic form, then turns around to write an anti-tourist mock haiku in affronting ways. The influence of Japan and Japanese is translated into new political contexts that cannot be called orientalist since they are so mongrel, self-conscious, and contemporary. Landscape traditions from Asia are evoked and enacted, both in lyrical and unstable ways as ideological modes. “Whatever Happened to Kala-huipua’a” mines more disturbingly into the Hawaiian name for the Mauna Lani Hotel, showing the need and greed that went into the neocolonial displacement of Hawaiians and their language-myths from a once agriculturally tamed yet boar-wild land form. Nuclear protests in Tahiti and in South Korea are registered in apt, credible, and wry ways.

“Most Powerful Nation” slips into a reggae and rap mode to mock the US imperial power in its slippages and contradictions. Distinct pidgin English versions of “Da Mento Hospito” register the weirdness of the H-3 freeway, linking a military base and a mental hospital for reasons of federal funding, enacting local and indigenous displacement. “Guerrilla Writers” and “E Utu” offer poetics and polemics mixed into one form of outrage and bliss. Elements of Japanese folk and classical tradition are later woven in,

as are elements of Japanese-American protest against internment heritages, whereas “Kapahulu Girl” captures a weird image of local adolescence as a kind of bondage.

Love poems, elegies, protest poems all have a calculated place and resonance in the overall collection; the last poem, “Alalakeiki,” captures the primordial grandeur of the islands as threatened by the US military commercial apparatus deployed at the island of Kaho’olawe—a recurring concern, along with the evocation of Hawaiian islandness and richness of language, for this inside/outsider from Japan, Virginia, Boston, and Hawaii Nei.

Spider Bone Diaries is the kind of book that opens to the past and future of Hawai’i, reshaping what we take to be the activist present, with all the “pessimism of the intellect and optimism of the will” that Gramsci said it would take to help forge a poetics of counter-hegemony in the world of lyric and neoliberal domination.

Poetry thrives and functions as an important genre in the emergence of the postcolonial Pacific in all its multilingual expressiveness; as such, all three of these works function to carry the multisited emergence of cultural poetics forward into the global/local future.

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