

No Mākou ka Mana: Liberating the Nation, by Kamanamaikalani Beamer. Honolulu: Kamehameha Publishing, 2014. ISBN cloth, 978-0-87336-293-1; paper, 978-0-87336-329-7; ix + 268 pages, maps, tables, photographs, notes, references, index. Cloth, US\$30.00; paper, US\$15.00.

Three decades ago, historian David Routledge reflected on the shortcomings of previous works of Island history and postulated for future works of Pacific history to be valuable, “not only that the Islands must constitute the environment but that Islanders must be the main actors. The history must not only be Island-centred but Islander-oriented” (“Pacific History as Seen from the Pacific Islands,” *Pacific Studies* 8 [2]: 90). While this “Islander-oriented” school of Pacific history has for the last couple of decades been dominant in Australian, New Zealand, and South Pacific universities, until recently it had been all but absent from the historiography of Hawai‘i. Thanks to the work of an emerging school of Hawaiian scholars, a comparable approach to history writing has finally made its way to the islands in the north. Although a few earlier pioneers whose research moved in similar directions should be acknowledged, Kamanamaikalani Beamer’s *No Mākou ka Mana: Liberating the Nation* provides a well-written outline of this new line of thought and may serve as a milestone in Hawaiian historiography.

In the introduction, Beamer states that in pronounced contrast to previously dominant narratives of the “fatal impact” type in which Hawaiians were portrayed as passive objects

or victims of Western interests and actions, his work is “not concerned with what missionaries or foreigners did for, or to, ‘Ōiwi [aboriginal Hawaiians], but rather what ‘Ōiwi did *for themselves*, in the midst of depopulation and the constant threats of colonialism” (12). When looking at the Hawaiian Kingdom from this angle, or in the author’s words, through “‘Ōiwi optics,” the perspective on the postcontact development of Hawaiian society and politics shifts radically. Applying ‘Ōiwi optics shows a continuity of traditional concepts of statecraft in the Hawaiian Kingdom, selectively appropriating Western ideas and technologies in a hybridized form in order to transform classical Hawaiian governance into a modern nation-state while maintaining Hawaiian identity.

Before analyzing this hybridization process, the book provides a detailed introduction to traditional Hawaiian statecraft. Beamer identifies three main principles of governance that shaped precontact Hawaiian polities, namely (1) *mō‘ī*, a supreme ruler at the head of each traditional polity; (2) *palena*, fixed and very precise land boundaries dividing the land into units such as *moku* (district) and *ahupua‘a* (land division usually extending from the uplands to the sea); and (3) *kalai‘āina*, the administration of the territory through the distribution of those bounded land units by a *mō‘ī* among his supporters. To show the complexity of the land system, the book provides beautiful reproductions of various maps produced by Hawaiian Kingdom surveyors during the nineteenth century. The same quality marks the various Hawaiian and

British archival documents the author deploys, many of which are reproduced in high resolution, giving the book a very exciting outlook.

Based on these sources, some hitherto unknown or not well interpolated in the writing of Hawaiian history, Beamer continues in the subsequent chapters to analyze how the modern Hawaiian state was built on these classical foundations and augmented through the selective appropriation of Western elements. Starting with speculations about Hawaiian engagements with the outside world before Captain Cook, based on evidence in Hawaiian-language sources, the book further contextualizes the unification of the archipelago by Kamehameha I given the precedence of the attempted archipelago-wide conquest by his distant ancestor Kalaunuiohua generations earlier. A focus on Kamehameha's early diplomatic relations with Great Britain and his use of British sailors as advisors and negotiators with foreign powers further exemplifies the author's use of 'Oiwī optics as a corrective lens on a critical period in the political history of Hawai'i. The story closely tracks and engages with Kamehameha II's 1823–1824 voyage to London to continue the relationship with Great Britain that his father had started; Kamehameha III's enacting of the country's first written laws; the 1839 Declaration of Rights and the 1840 Constitution; the 1834–1844 diplomatic voyage by Hawaiian envoys Timoteo Ha'alilio and William Richards to achieve international recognition as an independent state; and the complex process of land reform during the late 1840s and early 1850s known as the Māhele.

In each instance, Beamer highlights the agency of Hawaiian ali'i (chiefs/aristocracy) in shaping the foreign and domestic policy of their nation, while also acknowledging the contributing role of Westerners loyal to the Hawaiian Kingdom, whom he refers to as persons of "complex identity" (101).

Beamer goes on to narrate further reforms of government introduced by the third generation of Hawaiian Kingdom rulers, all of whom were educated in the Chiefs' Children's School. Each of them introduced his or her own innovations in order to further shift the kingdom in the direction of a global modernity while stressing its uniqueness, providing further evidence of ali'i agency. Perhaps most significant were King Kalākaua's contributions to reinforcing pride in Hawaiian cultural heritage, while more than ever before strengthening the kingdom's international connections and attempting to forge anti-imperial alliances with other non-Western states. The extensive discussion will reward readers' attention.

After the celebratory analysis of the achievements of 'Oiwī agency, the final chapter deals with the demise of the Hawaiian Kingdom's government due to the overthrow of Queen Lili'uokalani aided by invading US forces in 1893 and the occupation of the country by the United States since 1898. Beamer strongly refuses any teleological view of the overthrow. Rather, he sees it as a brutal and abrupt severing of the process of hybridization previously described. Beamer's assessment contrasts markedly with previous analyses that saw the main historical rupture in the coming of foreigners and the Hawaiian

Kingdom merely as a prelude to US colonialism, rendering the overthrow of 1893 simply as the culmination of a process long in the making. Beamer presents overwhelming evidence that such analyses are inaccurate. He also uses a new comparative framework for the Hawaiian Kingdom, refusing inappropriate comparisons of the Hawaiian Kingdom to colonies of European powers but rather stressing its similarity to other non-Western independent countries of the period, such as Thailand and Japan. As such, the period under American occupation past 1898 should best be described as “faux-colonial”—a status similar to colonialism in its socioeconomic consequences but in fact an illegal occupation of an independent nation-state.

Some readers might find the use of the word “indigenous” for aboriginal Hawaiian people and institutions confusing, since other proponents of the “Hawaiian agency” school consider the term “indigenous” inappropriate for the majority citizenry of an independent nation-state. However, one might see Beamer’s careful employment of the term as an attempt to bridge competing and often mutually hostile “indigenous” and “state-centered” schools of contemporary Hawaiian studies—a worthwhile goal in the face of ongoing US occupation. As hinted in the book’s subtitle, Beamer, a Hawaiian studies professor and community activist, does not merely engage in an academic exercise in historiography but also participates in a movement to turn the tide and lead to the eventual end of the US occupation of the archipelago.

In summary, *No Mākou Ka Mana* provides a refreshing view of

Hawai‘i’s past. Beamer’s work highlights the comparative importance of the Hawaiian Kingdom for nineteenth-century Pacific history. Indeed, the Hawaiian Kingdom is a crucial subject of research without which the “Islander-oriented” story would not be complete. Moreover, as shown by recent events such as the controversy over the letter written by the chief executive officer of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs to the US secretary of state in May 2014, Beamer’s analysis has equally far-reaching implications for contemporary Hawai‘i.

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Islands at Risk? Environments, Economies and Contemporary Change, by John Connell. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2013. ISBN 9781-78100-350-3; ix + 351 pages. Cloth, £93.00.

Islands at Risk? Environments, Economies and Contemporary Change is a concise examination of the many contentious issues facing small island states (SIS) across the globe. Although these geographically and historically diverse states may be difficult to categorize uniformly beyond basic geographical descriptors, John Connell’s work tackles the paradoxes of classification head-on by mapping out common SIS trends (and exceptions) in migration, economic prospects, and environmental vulnerability. Noting that one is hard pressed to come by a comprehensive and fine-grained comparative analysis of many SIS contem-