

New Zealand but also the racism that is its companion—Julie Paama-Pengelly creates a “vibrant, evolving, diverse expression of positive Maori identity. Each of the artists in this exhibition shares a unique insight into another world—their world—honouring Maori cultural struggle, cultural diversity and artistic excellence” (“Ta Moko is NOT Tattoo”). Again the format enables a different perspective than print copy would, as the images are allowed to move and interact with one another. The curator’s desire to delve deeper into the Māori psyche relating land, moko, and whare (house) is accomplished as these images coalesce.

Both Megan Tamati-Quennell and Jim Vivieaere use sound and moving and still imagery to demonstrate the diversity of practice among Māori, Pacific Island, and Pākehā New Zealand artists. In these exhibitions, moving image and poetry are placed within artistic practice; as Jim Vivieaere comments, it is the “curatorial intervention that determines the relationship” (“Part Umbra Penumbra”). In these exhibitions the viewer is afforded their own time—they create the relationships, they take whatever they find in the work—no hand leads us through the process.

Thus, *ARTPIX 3* offers us a continuum: the traditional article with its historical framework (yet incorporating all the technologies available); the exhibition with didactic material to lead us to the curatorial conclusion; and the exhibition/performance that one experiences and, if intrigued, asks more questions. This CD not only gives us a sense of contemporary art in New Zealand, it also demon-

strates the continuum of curatorial practice.

As I was so quick to “fess up” about my lack of computer skills, I will also note that I found reading Leonard’s text on a computer screen was not my preference. Using the interactive aspects of that piece brought the text to life, and I must now admit that I was glad that the other exhibitions had less text. The CD offered a lot of information and the format works well for the interpretation of art. However, it was best suited to those exhibitions that were less didactic. As a novice to this medium, I also found it difficult to know how to cite information from the texts from the CD. Clearly this is part of the process. This CD carries valuable information and brings insight into the art production of a nation. It is a well-constructed tool that will work exceptionally well in a classroom or teaching situation.

KAREN STEVENSON
University of Canterbury,
New Zealand

* * *

Night Is a Sharkskin Drum, by Haunani-Kay Trask. Honolulu: Tanaloa: Contemporary Pacific Literature and University of Hawai‘i Press, 2002. ISBN 0-8248-2570-5, xi + 70 pages, glossary. Paper, US\$13.95.

I cannot read this book dispassionately simply because it is so passionate. The poetry here draws on the spiraling continuum of the language and histories of ancient and contemporary Hawai‘i. Lessons are drawn

from the womb of Haumea, the earth-mother, herself.

Trask's political life as an activist leader of the Hawaiian nation adds a level to this multilayered book, living on the black-lava polished surfaces of the poems, and the fires beneath: "of lava stones, massaged / by tidal seas: eternal / *kanikau* for long- / forgotten *ali'i*, entombed / beneath grandiose hotels" ("Kona Kai'ōpua," 16–17).

The multiple references to Hawaiian mythologies draw us into the revolutionary story of Pelehonuakamea, Pele born from the womb of Haumea (see Pualani Kanaka'ole Kanahale, *Holo Mai Pele*, 2001, xi), also known as Pele'aihonua, "the volcano deity, who literally eats the land" (69): "From the red rising mist / of Kāhiki, the Woman of the Pit: / Pele, Pele'aihonua, / traveling the uplands, / devouring the foreigner" ("Nāmaka-okaha'i," 8).

As a newcomer to Hawai'i, I cannot claim an extensive knowledge of the mythological cycles of the Hawaiian people. I can appreciate, however, the Polynesian resonances within Trask's work: political, socio-economic, genealogical. I also appreciate that her referencing of the stories of Pele, Hina, Kāne, and Kanaloa (to name a few deities) focuses attention on the Hawaiian section of her readership and reminds us all of the significance of their knowledge, while giving those Hawaiians privileged with such an understanding an immediate intimacy with aspects of the poems.

As a New Zealand Māori reader, I find the worldview of the poetry compelling. Trask's deep intimacy with *ka wā mamua*, the time before, is an intimacy with the land itself:

"Slow-hipped Kāne'ōhe, / wet-scented lover / chanting / us in" ("Returning," 42).

Trask's poetry is laid out to highlight the disruption to history wrought by colonization, while the feelings are of profound and hurtful grief. Her poems in this book (dedicated to Kenyan writer Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o), are laid out like slashes across the body of a mourner. She sings of "a poisoned *pae'aina* / swarming with foreigners / and dying Hawaiians" ("The Broken Gourd, II," 12); "in the country, natives / without a nation: / The democracy of colonies. / For the foreigner, romances / of 'Aloha,' / For Hawaiians, / dispossessions of empire" ("Dispossessions of Empire, IV," 36).

This poet chooses an indigenous symbol—the sharkskin drum—and an indigenous concept—the Polynesian "po" (night), with all its literally *creative* resonance within Polynesian cosmogonies—in the title poem to call the volcanic goddess Pele: "Night is a sharkskin drum / sounding our bodies black / and gold. / All is aflame / the uplands a *shush* / of wind. / From Halema'uma'u / our fiery Akua comes: / E, Pele E, / E, Pele E, / E, Pele E" (5).

Trask succeeded in drawing me closer to Pele, and in getting me to seek out the chants that inform and inspire Trask's work. These chants reflect the drama of eruption and the capacity of volcanoes to reshape the landscape (see Kanahale 2001, 18). Look at the use of color, heat, and personified wind in the extract above, how the bodies fold into the drum, how English gives way to Hawaiian. The poet's vision dances in Pele's reshaping fire. Politics and culture in

Night is a Sharkskin Drum are literally overwhelming—they have to be. The beat of the drum is loud and alive here, and not muted as the sharkskin drums I recently saw behind glass in a museum. By drawing on a strength of her culture—the hula as embodied in the drum—Trask strengthens that culture and reminds us of the multiple ties that bind it together, while adding a new tie through her poetry.

Trask's strength reminds me of the Russian poets Osip Mandelstam and Marina Tsvetaeva. The allusions to Pele are in themselves revolutionary—they are an act of defiant memory. The assertive Hawaiian voice of the poems is in contrast to the economic coercion of the tourist culture Trask criticizes: "Every tourist, a camera / to capture us Natives" ("At Punalu'u," 31); "Even prostitutes know / their profession, but natives?" ("Dispossessions of Empire, III," 35).

The voice also strongly counters the American presence in Hawai'i, from the time of the missionaries to the present: "for our dead, / then stand / with the *lāhui* / and burn / their American / flag" ("Pūowaina: Flag Day," 28).

This is the bold and uncompromising voice of a poet.

Trask speaks to many Polynesians. Albert Wendt, Witi Ihimaera, Epeli Hau'ofa, Reina Whaitiri, and Sia Figiel all have contributed impressive praise for the front page and back cover of the book, and rightly so. On the back cover, Figiel gives us an insight to the inner workings of the poems: "despite the ugliness she has seen, the ugliness that has pierced her, stabbed her, wounded her, scarred her and her people, there is beauty still."

Let me not only celebrate the political and cultural levels of this book. On reading some of these poems I found the same delight in particulars as in reading Pablo Neruda's *Maremoto Seaquake* (1993). In the shallows of Waimānalo, Trask finds "caves / filled with / cooled lava / and little / sparkling fish" ("The Shallows," 52). In "Run into the Sea," we're immersed in "foam and plume," and "spume salting the wind" (55). She conjures the soul's leaping place for Hawaiians' ancestral Kahiki (Tahiti). It is here, in the poem's setting, that I wish to leave this review, in the homeland of eastern Polynesia, a paradise extolled as Rangiataea (also within the Tahitian group) by Māori, a place where at least our souls are sovereign:

"Blue, now gold / a great *honu* follows. / Beyond the leaping / point, our souls / depart. / More beautiful still" ("Together," 59).

Stroke the words, dance in the light, join the circle of gods and people of this very fine and thought-provoking book.

ROBERT SULLIVAN

University of Hawai'i, Mānoa

* * *

When the Shark Bites, by Rodney Morales. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002. ISBN 0-8248-2565-9, viii + 360 pages. US\$17.00.

The publication of Rodney Morales's novel *When the Shark Bites* extends his already significant contributions to the literature of Hawai'i and the Pacific, his short story collection *Speed of Darkness* (1988) and his edited