

age because of the significant increase in production costs. The information presented here helps contextualize each performance and provides additional insights into the realities of music making in the contemporary Pacific. As I perused this booklet, I was reminded of Jay Junker's excellent liner notes for a number of Hawaiian slack-key guitar CDs released on George Winston's Dancing Cat boutique label (examples of which can be found on the Dancing Cat Web site: <http://www.dancingcat.com/notes/08022-38052-2.php>). Since all the selections here are sung in the Marshallese language, it would have been helpful to provide English translations of the lyrics, but this is a minor quibble, given the overall spirit of generosity embodied in this endeavor. Few compilations of this type would feature twenty-three tracks and seventy-four minutes of music—to the contrary, many producers would package this material in two volumes simply to increase revenue. Refreshingly, Stege also resists the temptation to imply that this music is inherently more legitimate as an expression of Marshallese culture than the electronic music that followed in the most recent quarter century.

Ultimately, the mission of the Majuro Music and Arts Society is to create a lasting archive of Marshallese music, art, and other performative cultural expressions and to share that archive with as wide an audience as possible. *Moonlight Leta Volume 1* is a well-conceived and well-executed debut project, and I enthusiastically recommend it to anyone looking to become more conversant with the

acoustic music of an important transitional era in the postcolonial Pacific.

DAVID KAMMERER

Brigham Young University-Hawai'i

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We Are the Ocean: Selected Works, by Epeli Hau'ofa. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008. ISBN 978-0-8248-3173-8, xxi + 188 pages, notes, index. US\$22.00.

Epeli Hau'ofa died in Suva, Fiji, on 11 January 2009. He was a friend and wantok (someone who speaks the same language) to so many of us, and he will be sorely missed. His words live on, however, and his place is firmly established in the pantheon of Oceanian scholarship. In depositing *We Are the Ocean* at the feet of his intellectual and spiritual heirs a few short months before his departure from this world, Epeli could leave no better legacy.

The writings included in this collection span a thirty-year period, from 1975 to 2006. This significant temporal reach is reinforced by two other qualities. One is the fact that Oceania as a whole is revealed as Epeli's home, his roots being grounded in several institutions, islands, and countries: Misima, the University of Papua New Guinea, the University of the South Pacific, Tonga, and, metaphorically at least, the "Big Island" of Hawai'i. These distinctive places figure in his writings as petals floating on the ocean; scattered, fragrant, and steeped in meaning. They collectively constitute at once a journey as much as a geography, a world full of revelations of the past and of the future of

the Island Pacific. Take, for instance, the circumstances that inspired him to write his now famous "Our Sea of Islands" speech (27–40): It was for an Association for Social Anthropology in Oceania (ASAO) conference, held in Hilo in 1993, and he had not prepared it before arriving on the island.

"The drive from Kona to Hilo was my 'road to Damascus.' I saw such scenes of grandeur as I had not seen before: the eerie blackness of regions covered by recent volcanic eruptions; the remote majesty of Mauna Loa, long and smooth, the world's largest volcano; the awesome craters of Kilauea threatening to erupt at any moment; and the lava flow on the coast not far away. Under the aegis of Pele, before my very eyes, the Big Island was growing, rising from the depths of a mighty sea" (30).

It is this sense of particular places charged with emotion that marks Epeli's imagination, their presence permeating the entire book and giving a spiritual power to Oceania: "Every so often in the hills of Suva, when moon and red wine play tricks on my aging mind, I scan the horizon beyond Laucala Bay, the Rewa Plain, and the reefs of Nukulau Island, for Vaihi, Havaiki, homeland. It is there, far into the past ahead, leading onto other memories, other realities, other homelands" (77).

Epeli's journey was also an intellectual one, and this is the second distinctive quality characterizing *We Are the Ocean*. Taken together, the 14 contributions—8 essays, 1 eulogy, 1 interview, 3 works of fiction, and 1 poem—recount a voyage from academic anthropologist to promoter of Pacific arts and culture. It is this jour-

ney of (re)discovery of self that transformed him into the elder statesman of a realm that knows no government and has no geographical boundaries. It is at once memory, reality, and dream, or at least fragments of each that must be (re)assembled with great care. Such is the task that Epeli Hau'ofa assumed in the course of his career, by virtue of fate and choice: fate because he was educated in many places and in diverse ways, choice because early in adult life he became dissatisfied with the professional world for which he had been trained. His university studies had made him into an observer and a narrow disciplinary expert, roles that didn't fit with his identity as a Pacific person.

We Are the Ocean recounts a journey Epeli was intent on sharing with fellow citizens of the Great Ocean and with "those who have gone to the lands of diaspora," a journey that has resulted in the building of "a new home for us all," and an experience that will lead to the creation of "an ever creative and free Oceania" (93).

The collection is divided into four sections: Rethinking, Reflecting, Creating, and Revisiting. They relate the progression from professional anthropologist and development studies expert in part 1; to Oceanian intellectual reflecting on regional heritage and identity, hence of a shared pathway into the future in part 2; to creative writer recounting the absurdity of the neocolonial experience in part 3; and to reflections on Tongan society and monarchy in part 4. This last section ends with one of the few poems Epeli wrote, "Blood in the Kava Bowl." It tells the story of a group of Islanders

drinking kava while discussing colonialism and oppression with a “professor”: “Who we are we know and need not say / for the soul we share came from Vaihi. / Across the bowl we nod our understanding of the line / that is also our cord brought by Tangaloa from above, / and the professor does not know. / He sees the line but not the cord / for he drinks the kava not tasting its blood” (180).

It is this failure on the part of “experts” to really understand that lies at the heart of *We Are the Ocean*, for understanding is not simply a matter of knowledge. It is also grounded in memory and in experience, and it is expressed in a tradition of communication that is essentially oral, fluid, and steeped in metaphors, images, and stories. To truly comprehend requires a careful mixing of objective fact, memory, and emotion. To invest the future requires collective will. Herein lies the importance of Hau’ofa’s message. What is said in this collection is not necessarily new or original; all these papers have been published before. Further, his observations are not always objectively true, precisely because his writings are a mix of metaphor, of observation, and of intent, and hence of a concern to restore authority and dreaming to an entire region. Albert Wendt and others have, in earlier years, covered some of the same ground. What distinguishes Hau’ofa from many of his predecessors is that he was always avowedly an educator, a transmitter of knowledge, and his voice was invariably a gentle one. He was dedicated to writing with love (alofa, loloma, aroha, aloha . . .). Only in the poem cited above does the reader detect a sense of anger.

The book’s message is clear. Epeli didn’t reject scholarship, although he obviously had serious doubts about “disciplines.” His point is that scholarship is not enough, for it is not grounded in Oceanian cultures and experience, and it doesn’t speak of hope or dreams.

Epeli Hau’ofa’s stature is based on the fact that the oral traditions that nurtured him as a child ensured that he spoke with the authority of the ancestors, and his diverse Island experiences resulted in many voices being blended into a single message, while his academic training in Australia and Canada ensured that his words would be given due attention in the corridors of scholarship. He knew the language of the experts and he knew the language of the Islands. The result is sometimes painful to read, as in “Anthropology and Pacific Islanders” (3–10) and sometimes hilarious, as in “The Glorious Pacific Way” (110–119).

If there is one image in *We Are the Ocean* that demands the attention of the reader it is that of Epeli “being haunted by the faces of his students” when he taught the belittling view of Pacific Island societies and economies that is still expressed by so many social scientists. For that reason alone this collection devoted to the (re)appropriation of Pacific Island identity and futures should be read and pondered by all Oceanian students and by all students of Oceania.

Epeli has rejoined the ancestors in his Havaiki homeland, but he will continue to listen, and to care.

ERIC WADDELL
*Université Laval and
 University of Sydney*

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