

## Book and Media Reviews

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then again, the audience did not seem to stay in them for long. We were there to hiva.

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*The Empires' Edge: Militarization, Resistance, and Transcending Hegemony in the Pacific*, by Sasha Davis. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2015. ISBN cloth, 978-0-8203-4456-0; paper, 978-0-8203-4735-6; 176 pages, photographs, maps, references. Cloth, US\$59.95; paper, US\$22.95.

This is the book I wanted to write. I am really worried about my professional jealousy fangs showing. But a quick run of index finger over incisors reassures me that I have not monstrously metamorphosed. The reason I wish I had written *The Empires' Edge: Militarization, Resistance, and Transcending Hegemony in the Pacific* is that it examines one of the most pernicious problems of the past two centuries in our region—militarization—and analyzes it in tandem with one of the great hopes of the same era—anti-imperialist resistance movements.

In this sense, *The Empires' Edge* is very much part of the same conversation as Keith Camacho and Setsu Shigematsu's *Militarized Currents: Toward a Decolonized Future in Asia and the Pacific* (2010) and earlier critiques of nuclear militarization such as Stewart Firth's *Nuclear Playground* (1987). My own humble contribution to this literature—"bikini and s/pacific n/oceans" (the version reprinted in

2000)—gets cited often enough in *Empires' Edge* for me to forget my envy and bask in the affirmation.

Sasha Davis wrote this book while teaching geography at the University of Hawai'i at Hilo. It builds on and extends his doctoral work on nuclear contamination on Bikini Atoll and draws on fieldwork carried out in 2001–2013 around military bases in the Pacific and among activist networks (indeed, many of Hawai'i's and Guam's most respected activists are thanked in his acknowledgments).

What is especially refreshing about Davis's approach as an author is the way he translates and applies theory in intelligible and accessible ways. When I came across his first citation of Giorgio Agamben, I cringed and braced myself for an assault of Agamben's signature dense language. Instead, I got this: "The inhabitants of the region are treated by faraway governments and militaries as 'others' that do not get incorporated into the dominant group's conceptualization of 'us.' The scholarship of Giorgio Agamben (1998, 2005) is useful for understanding this colonial situation. In his work Agamben points out that there is a big difference in the way governments and other powerful entities treat people who are merely physically alive and people who are considered part of the body politic (people who, in a sense, have a politically recognized and valued life). The people in this recognized 'in-group' have rights to political representation, are subject to legal protections, and are granted access to state programs for the maintenance of their health, productivity, and security. People deemed to be outside the 'in-

group' (people not in the 'nation') are not subject to these privileges. Agamben refers to these excluded people as 'bare life': people who are biologically alive but do not have lives that a state sees as worthy of political concern or protection. These 'bare lives' are seen at worst as potential threats to the lives of 'real citizens,' and at best as irrelevant" (17–18).

Although the quote is lengthy for a review, I have chosen to use it because it not only illustrates the clarity of Davis's application of Agamben to the phenomenon of militarization in the Pacific but also identifies with steely precision the kind of epistemological or ideological position from which some lives are ranked as more important than others.

Davis draws on more of Agamben, along with a host of other theorists from geography, feminist geopolitics, political ecology, studies of social movements, and postcolonial studies, but his use of theory is never heavy-handed, and we are never in doubt about its purpose—which is to shine light on phenomena in the world rather than on itself.

The monograph draws on case studies from US military bases in Hawai'i, Okinawa, Guam, the Northern Marianas, the Marshall Islands, and the Philippines. However, Davis chose to structure the book thematically for the purpose of demonstrating "the fluid nature of American imperialism—and the way the military base network has shifted from place to place" (30).

The book comprises six chapters: "Hegemony and Affinity in the Islands of Empire"; "Surveying the Baseworld"; "Seeing like an Empire:

Islands as Wastelands"; "Local Resistances and Imperial Reactions"; "Colonialism, Militarization, Tourism, and Environment as Nexus"; and "Networks of Affinity and Myths of the Postcolonial Pacific." The chapter titles signal Davis's key interests and theoretical propositions: as mentioned earlier, he is interested in both hegemonic imperialism and counter-hegemonic resistance in the Pacific.

In particular, he juxtaposes "hegemony-seeking" and "affinity-seeking" power. Thus, military bases are understood in terms of their hegemony-seeking power and their role in demarcating inclusion and exclusion and, most important, domination. The social movements and activist groups organizing resistance to militarization and military bases are understood in terms of their affinity-seeking power. Unlike hegemony-seeking power, affinity-seeking power "comes from a space of recognizing that no one is more or less qualified, more or less pure, more or less able to speak, than others. Affinity politics is based on holding solidarity with others, regardless of differences, for the purpose of undoing relationships of domination not just 'out there' but between activists as well. . . . While the movements are not devoid of hegemony-based organizing, there are strong commitments to consensus decision making, local autonomy, solidarity, and being watchful of relationships of domination within and between activist circles" (22).

This book will help anyone who is interested in contemporary politics and international relations in the Pacific Islands region to appreciate just how high the stakes are when it comes to the militarization of the region—

and this means not only scholars but also activists, journalists, and, indeed, military personnel.

Although Davis focuses on US militarization, his intention in titling the book *The Empires' Edge* was to signal that patterns of US militarization in the Pacific share much in common with the broader processes that other hegemony-seeking powers have demonstrated both historically and contemporaneously in the region. To be certain, the Pacific region constitutes the edge of not one but multiple empires.

To conclude, a brief note on some fascinating aspects of the geography of this publication's genealogy and afterlife. Davis completed his PhD at Penn State University, and his doctoral material from Bikini noticeably enriches the monograph. *The Empires' Edge* is published by the University of Georgia Press, with offices in London, UK, and Athens, Georgia, at some great distance from the parts of the world Davis is writing about. But having Pacific issues raised in the press's Geographies of Justice and Social Transformation Series could have interesting—and hopefully transformative—effects on future conversations about militarization and resistance in our region. Davis has ostensibly departed the Islands and is now based at Keene State College in New Hampshire. What a parting gift this book was, then! As he notes about the affinity-seeking power that informs the activist networks resisting militarization in the Pacific, it is filled with aloha.

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*Huihui: Navigating Art and Literature in the Pacific*, edited by Jeffrey Carroll, Brandy Nālani McDougall, and Georganne Nordstrom. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2015. ISBN 978-0-8248-3895-9; vii + 308 pages, artwork, photographs, notes, works cited, contributors biographies. Paper, US\$29.00.

*Huihui: Navigating Art and Literature in the Pacific* breaks new ground as the first book-length, collaborative exploration of Pacific literary and artistic rhetorics and aesthetics. Foundational anthologies, such as *Lali: A Pacific Anthology* (Wendt 1980) and *Nuamua: Pacific Writing in English since 1980* (Wendt 1995), offer a broad and representative sampling of literature throughout the Pacific, relying on English as a common language for contributors and readers. More recent anthologies have embraced the multilingual realities of the Pacific but focus on the complexities within a single island group. Since 1995, Huia Press has published its series of biennial award-winning prose as both the English-language *Huia Short Stories* and the companion Māori-language *Ngā Pakiwaitara a Huia*, while collections like *Vārua Tupu: New Writing from French Polynesia* (Stewart, Mateata-Allain, and Mawyer 2006) move effortlessly between Reo Mā'ohi, French, and English in a single volume. Among *Huihui's* many strengths is the dexterity with which it weaves the diverse languages and locations of Moana Nui into one book. The twenty-four chapters include texts translated from indigenous and settler languages, texts presented in the original language alongside English, and