

Book and Media Reviews

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king who was endowed with a new kind of mana.

The latter projects, sites, and objects were politically and cosmologically centripetal. Like the ones they replaced, they now empowered Christian chiefs and the missionaries who proselytized them, just as dry-season activities had renewed hierarchical authority in society prior to contact. The former were centrifugal and followed in the train of the cosmological precedents of wet-season rites of reversal, transgression, and play that ritual temporarily authorized. Indeed, Sissons goes on to point out that in some cases, iconoclasm was succeeded in the season of the “Pleiades above” by rejection of Christianity and the new society, and efforts were made to revive forms of precontact revelry, authority, and so forth, particularly in the aftermath of drought, crop failures, and epidemics.

Enlivened by a persuasive eye for detail, the narratives of Sissons’s book rehearse this pattern of alternating political intervals. From wet to dry seasons, iconoclasm repeatedly shifted over to religious conversion in Polynesia. But of course this “seasonality of power” was not at all a result of some kind of mechanical view of social action. It resulted from voluntaristic leadership of a hereditary aristocracy who willingly allied themselves with missionaries and European monarchs. Kamehameha, for example, apparently considered England’s King George to be some kind of an “elder brother,” and religious leaders likened missionaries’ goals of church construction as akin to the marae construction projects they used to organize.

Sissons’s principal trope, “the seasonality of power,” and this general argument, are meant to make the point that in Polynesia, the initial decades of colonial domination, did not result from a concerted form of unilateral action that was expressed in a single voice. Colonial domination was not a simple assertion of superior force and violence. Not to discount the tragedies of disease, dispossession, and humiliation, it nevertheless drew on a combination, or what I would call dialogue, between the interests and cultural capital of Polynesian elites on the one side and foreign interests and cultural capital on the other. History need not be the spoils of the victors.

Polynesianists of all varieties should find much of interest in Sissons’s book. In addition, it will be useful in middle- or upper-level undergraduate courses on the region, as well as in graduate seminars on the anthropology of social change not only in the Pacific but, given its broader theoretical concerns, for more general pedagogical agendas.

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Te Vaka. 30 October 2015, Hawaii Theatre Center, Honolulu.

Te Vaka, the award-winning and wildly popular South Pacific fusion group representing and featuring music and dance influences from many Pacific Island cultures, kicked off their US tour on 9 October 2015, with stops in Florida, Washington, California, Arizona, and Hawai‘i. Touring members included founder,

songwriter, and bandleader Opetaiia Foa'i; lead drummer and percussion composer Matatia Foa'i; vocalist, keyboardist, and percussionist Douglas Bernard (aka D.Burn); vocalist, dancer, and choreographer Olivia Foa'i; electric guitarist and percussionist Joe Toomata; bassist and percussionist Max Stowers; dancer Gerard Tioti; and dancer Etueni (Edwin) Pita. With their wide range of influences and impeccable skills, these musicians and dancers gave a spectacular performance, and the audience enthusiastically reciprocated. Indeed, the hallmark of the tour was a contagious energy that began its spread months before the first show with the band's announcement of a major upcoming project and an album release, and that energy fully enveloped the audience during the 30 October performance in Honolulu.

In August 2015, Te Vaka announced in their newsletter and via social media that Opetaiia had signed on as songwriter—along with Lin Manuel Miranda and Mark Mancina—for Disney's upcoming feature film *Moana*, which is set for theatrical release in November 2016. In concert with this announcement, on 14 August Te Vaka performed one of the new songs for the film during D23: The Official Disney Fan Club's D23 EXPO, a biannual event showcasing, among other things, Disney's current and upcoming projects. Not long after, on 24 September, the band released their much-anticipated eighth studio album, *Amataga*. Members actively promoted *Moana*, *Amataga*, and the US tour on social media, stirring up excitement that spilled over into the group's live performances. The

Honolulu audience definitely brought this excitement to the show. Adding to this was a strong sense of community among those present: attendees of all ages and representing many of the communities in Hawai'i quickly found friends and family in the crowd, greeting each other with hugs and excitement about the night's event. To our great surprise, Auli'i Cravalho, the teen from Mililani, Hawai'i, who was cast to play the title character in *Moana*, was part of our concert community that evening (I turned to my left, and there she was just one section over). We were all looking forward to a memorable show.

The first half of the concert featured some of the group's softer and more serious songs, and the audience responded accordingly, smoothly shifting from bright to somber depending on the tone of each piece. During the introduction to one song in particular, sections of the audience burst into applause at the mention of Tuvalu but then fell into silence when Opetaiia explained that the piece, "Loimata e Maligi" (Let the Tears Fall), mourns the loss of eighteen teenage girls and their supervisor in a dormitory fire in Tuvalu on 8 March 2000. The performance itself, led by Olivia, was breathtaking. Olivia's voice filled the song's range—both vocal and emotional—beautifully, and the entire group's impeccable delivery left the audience rapt. The other songs during this half of the concert were equally engaging with their respective topics and outstanding delivery, and the audience was eager to participate throughout, cheering at the mention of any Pacific Island place and—in the case of a handful of particularly lively audi-

ence members in the middle orchestra section—standing to dance during the more upbeat songs. Momentum was building.

During the second half of the concert, it peaked. Encouraged to dance (Opetaia invited people to dance in the aisles, quickly adding that he probably shouldn't have said that) and elated to have met Disney royalty during an intermission meet-and-greet with Auli'i, the audience was ready to explode with energy. Our excitement was reflected back to us in the jubilant faces and exemplary performances of the band as they led the second half with one danceable hit after another. Te Vaka took full advantage of our willingness to join in by creating plenty of opportunities for audience participation: leading call-and-response sections, prompting rhythmic claps to introduce songs, and encouraging people to dance along throughout the auditorium. For example, for the performance of "Siva Mamalu" (Majestic Dance), a song from *Amataga* celebrating pride in dance, Te Vaka members pulled concertgoers from the audience onto the stage to showcase their dancing skills. These recruited dancers did not disappoint, and the youngest—a little boy—earned the audience's loud praise with his expert moves. Similarly, when Te Vaka played "Pate Pate"—a crowd favorite—people were dancing seemingly everywhere, and even Auli'i took part in the excitement, climbing onstage to dance (by this point, the entire row in front of me was up dancing, so I couldn't see most of what she did). My personal favorite song of the night—and perhaps I am

giving away too much about myself—was "Tamahana," from the 2003 family film *The Legend of Johnny Lingo*. I was definitely not alone. As soon as Opetaia explained the story of how the producers of a certain film convinced him to write a song in English (which he rarely does), countless "Tamahana" fans erupted into cheers. The song itself had many of us shedding tears as we sang along, belting out each verse and chorus in turn. After such an epic set, the audience had to have more, so Te Vaka returned for an encore of "Te Hiva" (The Dance), a fitting final hoorah.

Te Vaka's performance was matchless, and their enthusiasm was intoxicating. The group fostered a sense of inclusivity by providing song introductions in English and radiated a sense of welcoming and family throughout the theater and beyond. With my personal bias and delight at having attended my very first Te Vaka concert, it is quite difficult for me to pick out anything lacking or disappointing about the show. Perhaps the vocal microphone was a little loud for a moment after the return from intermission—but then again, the band was more powerful than due to the energy that had built up by that time, so such a need for adjustment was inevitable and in this case was handled very well. Perhaps the audience had a little trouble clapping in time when encouraged to do so before the drums began—but then again, the space was large and the audience members assertive in their enthusiasm, so the slight disorganization at times made sense. And perhaps the venue's seats were a little small and close together—but

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-