

self-hatred” (24). It is through Nafanua and the symbol of journey that the poet finds connection to her grandmother marooned in Amerika (“granny”), her own various selves (“pilgrim’s progress”), and a future generation of Pacific sisters/daughters (“Sā Nafanuā”). This last poem is a triumph of swinging rhythm, blended symbolism, and feminist celebration, and well deserves its several appearances in anthologies.

In the “malaga / traveling party” section, following “departure,” is a careful sequence from quiet lyrical description of island life (“ianeta’s dance”), to the intrusion of international politics (“war news”), and a prayer for diasporic Black women battling numerous tribulations in Europe (“may your sleep be blessed”). As the verse becomes more rhetorically public, incantation and literary occasion tend to supplant the poet’s private encounter with a point of concern. Thus, in “death at the christmas fair: elegy for a fallen shopper,” the shocked witnessing of a poor Islander’s fatal heart attack outside a Honolulu shopping mall is deflected into an attack on trashy consumerism that seems an imposed poetic gesture of merely sentimental political effect. Equally, the occasional poem “village of hope: by the rivers of babylon” has a certain oratorical flair but remains what it is: a conference opening that plays obviously with a popular Caribbean song. Against these lapses into “poeticity,” we can set something like “medea of the islands,” which is densely literary in style and reference, but because of that, also a compelling lament for and critique of the self-destructive rage of parts of contemporary society in the Pacific. There is

also “on form & content, or: slouching toward texas,” which is an effective Ginsbergian “rant” that demands to be read aloud, achieving intensity through a satiric ringing of the changes on the US national anthem.

As the journeying comes to a closing “reunion,” the voice modulates back to a private quietude and a sequence of haiku reflectively evoking the author’s natural surroundings on O’ahu. The book is a well-devised collection. One might wish for a more exciting cover, but the contents make a worthy addition on the poetry shelf to similar voices such as Teresia Teaiwa’s, and different but not altogether dissimilar ones such as in Albert Wendt’s *Photographs* (1995).

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Kalahahele, by Imaikalani Kalahahele.
Honolulu: Kalamakū Press, 2002.
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notes. Paper, US\$9.95.

Utterance always carries the powerful conditions of its speakers and writers. Imaikalani Kalahahele’s self-named collection of poetry and art, *Kalahahele*, gives utterance the force of an indigenous Pacific voice. The poet sings in mythic songs of friendship and good fellowship, chants of resistance, and rebukes in the utterances of contemporary Hawaiians. Kalahahele dances in the rhythm of his ancestors by evoking mythical themes. Kalahahele reflects the issues of culture, Hawaiian identity, land alienation, American exploitation, and cultural decolonization. This collection has poetry and art speaking simultaneously, imagining a society

that links the past with the present and the future. The Hawaiian artist and poet mediates between ancestral knowledge and modern influences in a lace of art and poetry that floats on the currents of the Pacific, across the islands and in space.

Most effective is Kalahale's infusion of English, Hawaiian Creole language, and the author's own indigenous language. Some of the poems are short and direct while others are lengthy. The longer poems are arranged in parallel order on a page to give the double emphasis of the poet's vision. The infusion of languages and line arrangement on pages give the work an aesthetic value and a control over utterances that are uniquely Pacific. The freedom the poet takes with arranging words and giving titles in different languages seems insurrectionary in the face of the established norms of traditional western poetry. Kalahale's collection of poetry and art, in which dialogical discourses appear, attests to collective Hawaiian voices struggling against hegemonic control and resonates with the direction taken by many Pacific writers.

The collection affirms the noteworthy emergence of Pacific poetry and art with its own piquancy and aesthetics. Kalahale has been around the Hawai'i and Pacific art and literary scene since the 1980s. He celebrates that maturity in this collection. Kalahale's poetry brings to readers a sense of peace and harmony. Within the flow of calmness, however, is an imminent threat that has settled on the shores of the Pacific. In "Amidst the 'Ōhi'a Trees," one hears "a million ancient sounds / of how our lives should be / with peace and dignity" (8). This peace is often disrupted and

tainted by globalized forces and activities. In "Paradise," a felicitous poem written in creolized upbeat form, the poet offers wit in perpetuating the imagery of paradise: "Some come / to see / da / beaches and / are awed, / "AH, PARADISE" / so / they come and / fence off / the beaches / to / build their homes / so / they can have / their little piece of / PARADISE / pristine" (34). The image of paradise is exploited by tourism and modern metropolitan practices. Resentment of the commercialized marketing of Pacific Islands in a package that is ideologically disruptive to the Pacific way of life is a persistent theme in the collection. The Pacific is no longer insulated from the gaze of the tourists. In "Huli," Kalahale asks:

Can you hear it?
History singing its sad
song.
The cannons at the
harbor
Marines coming over the
wall.

Can you hear it?
The Committee of Safety
plotting.
Armed hooligans threatening our
garden.
Imperialism practicing its
economics.

Can you hear it?
The cries of a
people
left to fend in a sea of
genocide
lost in their lands and
betrayed. (47)

The collection explores themes of loss, Hawaiian values, imperialism, cultural revival, and resistance. Kalahale

tries to capture moments that were bypassed in the wake of Pacific modernization, especially in Hawai'i. He brings home the feeling that the task is to reclaim some of these values, by reinventing the contemporary experiences of Pacific peoples. In poems such as "It's been a long time . . .," Kalahale questions what made Hawaiians forget their traditions, myths, songs, language, and cultures: "Was it time that / changed our memory" or "Was it change that / made us forget" (27). Kalahale reflects on and laments the lost tradition. In the poem, "Make Rope," he recalls an old man of tradition who spends time making a rope of life called "The Kaula of our people" (29). The suggestion here is that perhaps Hawaiian cultures and values that were lost or displaced can be reclaimed in writing and in art—an idea observed in many Pacific writings. In the memorable poem "dive into the source," the poet seeks the wisdom of his ancestors to speak about the plight of his people. In "A Letter to My Brother," Kalahale works around the metaphors of storm, mountains, and flood as images of devastation and denial: "And we know what the wave was! / Genocide. / Flooding the valleys / and stripping the limu clean / from the rocks. / Sweeping away the 'opae / from the streams, / the ulu from the land / and the maoli from the earth" (55).

Inspiration from nature appears in the poem "I Have a Need." The poet finds solace in the mountains, "in the trees and plants of the forests," in the ocean, "in the beasts and plants of the sea," in the stars and "flows to the seas," together with "the quiet calm of a bird's song" (72). The inspiration of his people is acknowledged in a

number of poems. In "E Hānai 'Awa Ka Ikaika Ka Makani," Kalahale writes: "Returning once more / over the mo'os [*sic*] back / Brothers of an / ancient family / gathered. / From the northeast / below Maui's hook / to the Southern Cross / and the lands below / a meeting of / mana was set. / We came with verse / in hand and found / the 'awa was / still there" (73).

A contemporary writer and artist, Kalahale is conscious of the need to infuse Pacific traditions with modern forms of expression. The extensive use of Hawaiian language, both indigenous and Hawaiian creole, invites the reader to experience the author's language and culture. Kalahale is comfortable writing in his Hawaiian voice as well as in the ambivalent voices of urban derision in many modern Pacific cultures. The influence of urban upbeat, reggae music, and the voices of Kalahale's people are derived from local settings and discourses. Through such evocations Kalahale is more forceful as a storyteller, a historian, and documenter of contemporary experiences (see his depiction of the roles of spirit of the forest in "Ē Laka Ē"). In "When Men Fought," Kalahale evokes the sense of collective struggle: "When men / fought / they stood / toe to toe / and / made the mountains / shake" (11). Likewise, "Bradas" stood together and would suffer together, in a call for a Pacific solidarity, oneness, and the sharing of a common struggle against exploitation by transnational globalized forces: "If brada get hep—you get hep. / If brada get jaundice—you get jaundice. / If brada get aids—you know, bra" (21). Similar themes appear in "PAK" and "Ho'okupu." The most powerful

statements are made through poems that consider the relationships of Hawaiians to one another as well as to other Americans. With its distinct indigenous Pacific culture, Hawai'i is also precariously caught up in the globalized forces of Euro-American influences, yet is able to maintain its links to others within and around the Pacific. These are captured in "No Fight Hawaiians," "Huli," "Ode to Fort Street," and "Rise Up."

The collection is a superb display of poetic skills, language use, and appropriation of forms available to the Pacific writer. A number of poems are shaped to reinforce the meaning of the words, including "Ōpala Uka," "Time Has Come," and "The Source." Shapes give form and meaning, evoking images strengthened by the power of the words selected to represent them. In most of his poems Kalahale uses very short, tight expressions that work effectively, with the different emphases and angles transforming the poet's thoughts and consciousness. Kalahale vividly portrays the world of struggle, resistance, and fight to keep his own Hawaiian identity.

The artist in Kalahale is well revealed in the author's illustrations that accompany most poems. By infusing the world of words with his visual art, Kalahale projects the relationship between the two artistic forms. Twenty-six illustrations in the book can be read on their own as texts that encompass more complex meanings. The six "Inaspace" illustrations capture the space in which words are not necessary, but can be read subjectively as spaces with words, texts, and utterances in the reader's imagination. The usefulness of Kalahale's illustrations in this collection

of poems is that they consolidate the artistic abilities and place of the poet as a visionary and voice of what is never said, but felt and suggested in finer language and artistic touches. In "Twisted Tight," Kalahale points to this sense of seeing and perceiving: "Twisted tight / the patterns of our ancestors / are revealed. Twisted tight the shape / will come" (82).

Kalahale fully explores the artistic gifts he is endowed with. He draws from the pool of his Hawaiian heritage, myths, cultures, language, and contemporary experiences. This collection is published at the time when poetry in the Pacific has come to express a unique Pacific voice, describing their experience in a form and language that arrests, as well as resists, monolithic forms of expressions.

This collection embodies some of the concerns and styles of poetic forms that I share with the author as a Pacific poet. Poetry, art, culture, politics, social change, and diasporic experiences of Pacific peoples are captured in our writings as they present themselves to us. Kalahale's collection strengthens the view that dialogically our cultures and contemporary experiences work at coming to terms with a Pacific that is constantly changing, yet it is up to Pacific peoples to imagine what they want to see of their collective identity. While Kalahale's poetry may be viewed in line with Hawaiian literature, this reviewer feels that as Pacific writers, we are writing parallel histories of our experiences as Pacific peoples.

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