

Book and Media Reviews

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That said and recognizing that Petrou writes as a human geographer rather than as an anthropologist, we would wish for a thicker description of Paamese experience in urban and rural settings. What was “Paamese” about those from Paama living in Port Vila? More specifically, was being a Paamese primarily a matter of geographical origin, or were there also diacritical cultural factors? If the latter, have markers of Paamese cultural identity, whether in town or on the island, changed over time? Correspondingly, we would want to know more about Paamese cultural ideas, past and present, that underpin sorcery and leadership. Perhaps, we wonder, these ideas have become less elaborated and culturally distinctive in town and village.

Our Chambri friend, John, would surely recognize that the demands for sharing, described by Rasmussen and Petrou in their valuable studies, have long been significant for Pacific Islanders. (Many social scientists working among these Islanders, we venture, have considerable experience of *singaut*.) Both aggravating and gratifying for the successful, remittances ensured that someone would be there if you did something big. And, for those just getting by, remittances ensured that someone would be there to help, lest you go under.

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A Primer for Teaching Pacific Histories: Ten Design Principles, by Matt K Matsuda. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2020. ISBN, hardback: 978-1-4780-0795-1; ISBN, paperback: 978-1-4780-0847-7; ISBN, e-book: 978-1-4781-4780-1211-5. Introduction, acknowledgments, notes, bibliography, index. Hardback, US\$89.95; paperback, US\$23.95; e-book, varies.

One of the leading proponents of a Pacific Worlds approach, Matt Matsuda offers a design for the teaching of histories of the greater Pacific region. He writes that histories should be less about geography and more about the historical connections, encounters, and actors in the broad regional expanse known as the Pacific. This “network of constellations” includes the great ocean; the western coasts of the Americas; the Asian bordering lands of China, Japan, and Korea; the Southeast Asian archipelago; the Philippines; and, at its center, the islands commonly referred to as Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia (11).

The book is first and foremost a primer for instructors teaching Pacific histories at the high-school and undergraduate levels. Acknowledging that this is a study from without, Matsuda argues that the region called the Pacific must first be “defined, assembled, shaped, and bounded” before it can be discussed (5). To this end, there is a need to begin with an interrogation of what is known. Rather than accept a standard map of the region, students need to reassemble the fragments of older, deconstructed histories to visualize the past,

ongoing, and increasingly important web of relationships. Matsuda's ultimate goal in this book is to advance a pedagogy that engages students with the experience of historical production; gives them a sense of their own agency in that production; and helps to launch them into the larger world. The author's command of the extant historiography is impressive. Sources range from the textual, linguistic, and archaeological to the literary, cinematic, and performative. Matsuda's design directs attention to hidden histories; relates historical issues to contemporary concerns; and joins all of this together through questions, activities, and planned exercises.

The book consists of ten chapters organized around three major themes: "Laying Foundations," "Devising Strategies," and "Performing Histories." The chapters are ordered chronologically. Chapter 1 focuses on a critical examination of the state of knowledge about the Pacific. Matsuda encourages instructors and their students to think critically about artifacts, images, and language families as a way to move beyond old stereotypes and presumptions. Chapter 2 concerns the multiple routes of migration and the human colonization of territories that are part of deeper Pacific pasts. Students are invited to consider the establishment of Island societies around the values of kinship, exchange, marriage, and the creation of political order with special attention to enacted histories such as the Hawaiian voyaging canoe *Hōkūle'a*.

Chapter 3 underscores the importance of wider connections, noting that they linked Pacific peoples not only to each other but to other areas

of the world, including Africa, the Middle East, and the Indian Ocean. The Chinese treasure fleets of Zheng He proved particularly important in this regard. The search for a mythical southern continent drove European explorations of the Pacific for centuries. The Spanish galleon trade joined Asia and the Americas, while the Dutch East India Company's spice trade brought the South and Southeast Asian regions into greater contact with the ocean Pacific. All of these explorations, conquests, and trading networks led to the establishment of settlements, the mixing of peoples, and the creation of intimate relationships not easily contained within national or even regional mappings.

Chapter 4 introduces issues of representation. The Enlightenment, the late-eighteenth-century intellectual and artistic movement, emphasized the use of science, reason, and logic to unlock the secrets of the human and natural worlds. It provided the lens through which Europeans sought to understand the Pacific. Encounters between strangers and host communities both challenged and changed this paradigm. Commerce followed contact. Whaling, sealing, and the Northwest fur trade furthered the development of regional networks, while European and American merchants sought to exploit island resources such as *bêche-de-mer* and sandalwood in an effort to expand trade with China. Empire is a fifth teaching tool. The contingency of the contact period gave way to histories of the region that were more regularized and structured. Matsuda cautions instructors and their students that imperialism is not simply about political domination. A focus on

the contested term “empire” and its multiple manifestations reveals a long-standing relationship to transnational commercial operations, which, in turn, profoundly affected the region’s environments and ecologies.

Trade and commerce also involve histories of labor and transport. The development of global markets and the consequent, large-scale capitalization of land and other resources led to a multiracial labor force on Pacific docks, wharves, and plantations. The recognition of this historical fact necessitates a reconsideration of immigration and the complex, often obscured interactions of host, immigrant, and settler communities. The parallels to contemporary controversies surrounding immigration are obvious and afford numerous opportunities for student engagement. Anthropology offers a historically contextualized vehicle for the study of difference and identity in the region. Who is studying whom? In what ways and for what purposes? These are questions that preface a critical investigation into the politics of representation in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The Pacific was a major theater of war in the mid-twentieth century and continues into the twenty-first century as a site of global contestation. Conflict, then, is a seventh tool for teaching Pacific histories. Instructive examples include World War II, the Cold War, nuclear testing in the Marshalls, and struggles for self-determination across the region. Matsuda aptly points to the many consequences of this violence. He writes of “environmental depredations, from warfare to atomic testing to mining and

overfishing—and the ways in which these actions were deeply connected to broader struggles for sovereignty, autonomy, and self-determination” (101).

Chapter 8 returns to identity as a teaching tool, and with specific reference to gender and justice. Sovereignty and autonomy should not be simply framed in terms of men’s interests but must consider women’s increasing roles and their concerns for health, education, the safety of children, and the protection of the family. Matsuda cites the use of comfort women in World War II, the Rape of Nanjing, and the Hawaiian sovereignty movement as case studies that link the search for justice to the study of history. Chapter 9 revisits the theme of representation and its politics. In more current settings, notions of the primitive and the modern continue to clash. Students are urged to consider whether the highly sensationalized accounts of cargo cults in Melanesia are less an Islander fixation with material goods than a Western desire to affirm modernity (114). The last chapter encourages students to engage with the contemporary Pacific through a host of issues that include climate change and the ascendancy of the region as a whole to global economic and political prominence. The rise of China receives considerable attention. The emphasis here is on preceding histories and the realization that China is not a monolithic entity but a diverse and complex nation.

This primer is intended for a Pacific histories course offered on the North American continent where English is the language of instruction. The location and distance involved here raises

a pedagogical consideration. In the Pacific Islands region, students bring personal experiences and family histories to the classroom, and often with considerable emotion. History is manifest in the surrounding landscapes and seascapes and in the artifacts and ongoing influences of colonial pasts. Students from beyond the region might be able to tap into this more intimate and personal educational environment through exchanges, winter-quarter visits, videoconferencing, and online forums with Pacific schools.

The sweep of this primer also elicits a historiographical comment. A broad-stroke Pacific Worlds approach risks losing sight of islands' own histories. Despite the author's efforts, it is difficult to keep the islands at the center of a "truly transpacific Pacific" (85). The different islands of the region did not experience these larger regional movements equally or at the same time. Moreover, it's important to ask how different Island peoples actually understood and made sense of these contacts with the larger region. This, in turn, raises the question of historicities, or the culturally specific ways that different Island peoples make their history. A Pacific histories course should include this critical topic as well as a more extensive consideration of the concept of indigeneity. Students might also be alerted to the politics of history making in settler colonies where the harshness of colonial rule is often elided in favor of false narratives of reconciliation.

It is also helpful to keep in mind Teresia Teaiwa's distinction between the Pacific and Oceania; the Pacific is a term that reflects external orderings

and understandings, while Oceania speaks to the fluid, rich, vibrant world envisioned by the Tongan scholar Epeli Hau'ofa—a world whose parameters were not the bordering rims of continental bodies but more immediately and specifically the seas, shores, and skies of the islands called Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia. *A Primer for Teaching Pacific Histories* outlines a course with a rich, welcome, and innovative historical perspective on the broader Pacific region. Such an approach also needs to acknowledge the complexities and specificities of Island histories.

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Pathway of the Birds: The Voyaging Achievements of Māori and Their Polynesian Ancestors, by Andrew Crowe. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2018. ISBN paper: 978-0-82487-865-8, 288 pages, maps, acknowledgments, key to language globes, endnotes, references, picture credits, index. Paper, US\$39.00.

Andrew Crowe has crafted a fascinating book that centers on the question of how the Māori reached Aotearoa/New Zealand. The answers echo how their ancestors reached Oceania itself. The book makes a strong visual impact, with generous use of maps, photos, and original designs, starting with the dust jacket. Rather than judge this book by its cover, though, it is more meaningful to judge it against its stated aims. Crowe sets the tone with an epigraph from celebrated Māori