

Displacing Natives. The Rhetorical Production of Hawai'i, by Houston Wood. Pacific Formations: Global Relations in Asian and Pacific Perspectives. Lanham, MD, Boulder, CO, New York, and Oxford, UK: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999. ISBN paper, 0-8476-9141-1; xi + 223 pages, illustrations, tables, coda, notes, bibliography, filmography, index. Cloth, US\$63.00; paper, US\$24.95.

This book opens nicely with a pedagogical tale—a story of when author Houston Wood was listening to a lecture by Esther Mookini, who introduced a Hawaiian text that has yet to receive the attention it well deserves: *The Wind Gourd of La'maomao* by Moses K Nakuina. Wood offers memories from his first introduction to perspectives of life in Hawai'i as he was informed of Hawaiian (re)sources that outline different methods and epistemologies relating to the natural world. As just one example, Wood was stunned to find that Nakuina's book lists the names of forty-five winds on the island of O'ahu alone. The diversity of identification and naming practices—and their attendant forms of knowledge sources—provoked Wood, moving him to reconsider his own experiences of the winds he felt as he stepped out of that lecture; he reflected on the winds of change among Hawai'i's people, particularly those moving through Hawaiian communities. Wood was profoundly challenged: "I began to wonder if I could find a way to resist my own colonization and to embrace some methods for subverting the colonizing work I was being educated to do" (3).

Wood's text is a well-intentioned

move away from what he terms an exclusively "foreign representation" to a more balanced inclusion of Native claims and representations that goes beyond his interrogation of Cook's journals, Twain's letters, Hollywood movies, and many other foreign representations. Identifying himself as a *haole* (white or foreign) scholar, Wood was first worried about accusations of appropriation. But he eventually decided that he did not want his text to neglect Native Hawaiian voices because of the risks involved in producing a "settler text" that would maintain what he terms "monorhetoric." Avoiding that end, Wood invokes "Native representations as alternatives to those constructed by outsiders and settlers" as reminders of more diverse sets of interactive practices (5). He makes a strong effort to include perspectives from Hawaiian cultural practitioners, scholars, and activists. Moreover, he acknowledges the fraught political contexts that problematize his very presence in the Hawaiian Islands, explaining that his book "is written with the recognition [that] it is necessary in Hawai'i today either to declare oneself for some version of Native sovereignty or against it" (3). His work aims to contribute to a growing body of decolonization literature on Hawai'i, as it examines various cultural productions in the hope that they will illuminate what he calls the "struggle over geography" there (3).

Wood delineates, in his terms, three "rhetorical situations" operative in Hawai'i today. The first, he argues, is evident in the employment of what he calls Euroamerican assumptions, tropes, and narratives to analyze how Euroamericans have represented

Hawai'i to themselves, to Hawaiians, and to the rest of the world (15). His second rhetorical situation occurs when Hawaiians use "Euroamerican languages" (though it is not entirely clear to the reader, given the rich history of Hawaiian modernity, where Euroamerican languages start or end) to challenge the validity of the representational practices used over the last two centuries, beginning with Captain Cook (15). In situations such as this, Wood argues, Hawaiians are able to level critical interventions, using existing tropes and narratives on behalf of Hawaiians at large. These modalities also enable a form of "critical localism" (17). The third rhetorical situation is associated with Hawaiians who continue cultural traditions identified as part of precolonial Hawai'i. These, Wood suggests, are "not comprehensible to those who understand only Euroamerican monorhetoric" (17), which he defines as "a body of symbolic acts that identify the islands with a linear, irreversible history associated with visible phenomena" (15). Wood's primary goal is to critique the workings of the first rhetorical situation while engaging the second and introducing readers to the third.

Wood focuses on the violent rhetoric of naming and how renaming, as an imposed practice, can aim to justify and disguise the consequences of colonial acts. Here, he examines a wide array of non-Hawaiian cultural production, including journalism, novels, diaries, advertisements, visual arts, films, and television media. He also examines the rhetorical production of (non-Hawaiian) missionaries, scientists, travel writers, journalists, novelists, painters, photographers, and lyricists who have "produced Hawai'i"

at the expense of Hawaiians, who become displaced by the monorhetoric (15). He focuses on this point more specifically when he traces the perverse uses of the concept of *kama'āina* (child of the land) by missionary descendants who appropriate Hawaiian identity to naturalize and bolster their own positions of dominance in the islands.

Other parts of the book are site-specific. One chapter addresses the effacement of the deity Pele in the multiple popular constructions of Hawaii Volcanoes National Park and the Hawaiian Volcano Observatory. Another traces how Waikīkī is always already subject to narratives that are destructively nostalgic and suggests that current plans to restore indigenous culture there might empower Hawaiians. Wood also includes a chapter that examines "safe savagery" in Hollywood representations of Hawai'i that are preoccupied with notions of primitive sexuality, the specter of danger, anxieties about racial difference, and entertainment management. In a chapter about the island of Kaho'olawe, he demonstrates the contrasts between monorhetoric and polyrhetoric through diverse representations of the long and troubling history of the island. He especially focuses on its history of being used as a bombing target by the US military (much like Puerto Rico's island of Vieques) and how it was reclaimed by Hawaiians who actively protested its mistreatment and were compelled to convey the meaning, often on their own terms, that the island holds in Hawaiian cosmology, spirituality, and history. Here, Wood advances his theory of polyrhetoric as a form of "critical traditionalism"

in that the cultural practices labeled polyrhetic work to interrogate monorhetorical (mis)understandings. In the final chapter, Wood documents many forms of Hawaiian nationalist sovereignty assertions proliferating through the world of cyberspace to indicate the possibilities that may be created through new forms of technology and media.

One troubling aspect of the book is that “Hawaiian voices” are too often reduced to merely “alternative rhetoric” rather than recognized for what they may promise in the way of epistemological resources and their corresponding implications. Looking to the fundamental Hawaiian cultural principle found in the saying, ‘*ōlelo i ke ola, ‘ōlelo i ka make* (in the word, life, in the word, death) enunciations themselves are alive and capable of producing multiple effects, including creating reality.

I came to this text from a broad interdisciplinary perspective and found that overall, Wood’s book offers very strong critical analyses of dominant cultural productions and discursive struggles, with a central focus on the contested terrain of representation. *Displacing Natives* is an excellent choice for courses that focus on US colonialism, Hawaiian Studies, literary and visual representations of indigenous peoples, and ethnic studies. In this time of ‘*ena makani* (stormy winds) it is important to see a scholarly work that explains the enduring process by which Hawaiian indigeneity is continuously effaced in and through the dominant popular culture.

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Ethnologie et Architecture: Le Centre Culturel Tjibaou, une réalisation de Renzo Piano, by Alban Bensa.

Paris: Adam Biro, 2000. ISBN 2-87660-240-7; 202 pages, photos, sketches, notes, bibliography, index. 290 French francs; US\$40.

This is a very fine work by Alban Bensa, an anthropologist at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, Paris, who has specialized in New Caledonia over the past thirty years. While the book might easily adorn a coffee table, being full of glossy photographs (150 in 200 pages) on high-quality paper, its contents reveal that it is also worthy of a rather different destination.

In 1990, Bensa’s book *La Nouvelle-Calédonie: Un paradis dans la tourmente* appeared in a popular series by the French publisher Gallimard. The work came to the attention of the Italian architect Renzo Piano just as he was about to tender for the construction of a cultural center in Noumea. This project had first been evoked in the Matignon Accords in 1988 and given further impetus following the assassination, a year later, of one of the signatories of those accords, the independence leader, Jean-Marie Tjibaou. Unfamiliar with the Pacific, Piano invited Bensa to be part of his team, which successfully bid for the project, and for the next seven years the author played a leading role as consultant.

This association with Piano represented for Alban Bensa “a new opportunity to carry forward the political struggle on the cultural and symbolic front where Jean-Marie Tjibaou had so wished it could also develop” (175). The author here situates himself