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Waikiki: A History of Forgetting and Remembering

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performativity of cultural encounters—how groups and individuals render themselves and how they are comprehended by others in contexts replete with colonial legacies—that constitutes his larger contribution to Pacific scholarship.

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Waikīkī: A History of Forgetting and Remembering, by Andrea Feeser and Gaye Chan. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006. ISBN 978-0-8248-2979-7; xi + 188 pages, maps, photographs, historical chronology, glossary, bibliography, index. Cloth, US\$29.00.

In *Waikīkī: A History of Forgetting and Remembering*, Andrea Feeser (author) and Gaye Chan (artist and designer) dig deep into the many layers of Waikīkī's history to reveal its extreme transformation from a site that once sustained Native Hawaiian communities and a diverse array of animal and plant wildlife, to a place that has been systematically commercialized and converted into "a paved-over and polluted urban resort" (124). Notably, the book constitutes an outgrowth of the Historic Waikīkī project, a political and social activist enterprise that seeks to examine and critique the impact of the colonial project, capitalist enterprise, and tourism in Hawai'i (see http://www.downwindproductions.com/about_us.html). Importantly, Feeser and Chan actively subvert the popular myth of Waikīkī as a playground

for leisure and pleasure seekers and instead reveal it as a site fraught with tension.

Waikīkī focuses on nine locations in the Waikīkī area—Lē'ahi (Diamond Head), the Ala Wai, Kālia, Kawehewehe, Helumoa, Uluniu, Kaluaokau, and Kāneloa and Kapua. Each location constitutes a chapter that weaves together "the many stories that thread through Waikīkī's past and present" (8), thus enabling a more complex and nuanced reading of the place and the people whose lives have been woven into the fabric of Waikīkī's distant and more recent history. The authors' choice of each location is strategic in that all are associated with the three natural springs that once provided fluid sustenance to the land and its inhabitants—springs that are deeply connected to the meaning of Waikīkī's name: "Place of Spouting Waters." In a unique and creative way, Feeser and Chan use the springs—'Apuakēhau, Pi'inaio, and Ku'ekaunahi—as a salient metaphor for both the land's and the people's suffering and resilience in the wake of colonial imposition. The authors argue that although the flow of the springs has been impeded as a result of the development process, the fact that they periodically resurface through subterranean channels serves as a signal "that Waikīkī's people and places . . . have not been destroyed" (87).

As Feeser and Chan reclaim the memory of Waikīkī's forgotten history through written and visual texts—a history that has in the recent past been submerged under concrete, steel, and tourist advertising—readers are challenged to reconsider their own role in the construction and deconstruction

of Waikīkī and other places where tourism has taken root. The authors note that on critically reflecting on Waikīkī's past and present, readers will gain a deeper awareness of their "relationships to the places and people that make up [their] holiday destinations" (8) as well as come to appreciate and understand the myriad complexities that frame Waikīkī's history. Importantly, although Feeser and Chan draw critical attention to the destructive impact of capitalism and colonialism on the lives of Native Hawaiians and the environment, they also unveil a narrative of indigenous resistance and agency in the face of dramatic and traumatic change.

The theme of indigenous agency is a common thread in *Waikīkī*. While Feeser and Chan provide an informative and poignant overview of the devastating impact of colonialism on Native Hawaiians through disease, dispossession of lands, and the systematic denigration of indigenous cultural practices and beliefs, the authors are nevertheless mindful of the many ways in which Native Hawaiians actively fought against (and, indeed, continue to fight against) foreign impositions. For instance, in the chapter titled "Hamohamo," Feeser and Chan consider the role of women—specifically Queen Lili'uokalani, her niece Ka'iulani, and the women of Hui Aloha 'Āina—in the battle against "power-hungry American businessmen and politicians" during the late nineteenth century (103). As the authors point out, these women worked hard to save their lands and people by lobbying for support, both from within and without, and by publicly denouncing the illegal actions of those who sought to annex Hawai'i.

Importantly, by emphasizing the agency and potency of Hawaiian women during a period of great upheaval in Hawai'i's history, Feeser and Chan provide an alternative vision of Hawai'i and Waikīkī as places where women enacted power, rather than as places where "a welcoming, glamorous, and exotic feminine embrace" awaited the visitor (102). The displacement of such perceptions is crucial because, as Feeser and Chan argue, the feminization of Hawai'i and Native Hawaiian women "reduces both to mere pawns of American imperialism and capitalism" (102). Chan, who is responsible for designing the layout of *Waikīkī*, cleverly juxtaposes images of exoticized Hawaiian women—images that appeared in tourist brochures during the 1950s and 1960s—alongside anecdotal accounts of Hawaiian women's resistance to annexation in the 1900s. The obvious dissonance between the images and the text provides a space wherein "archetypal images that have come to exemplify certain places, [and] people" can be reexamined and reinterpreted (175). This is one of the great strengths of the book: the authors force us to consider Waikīkī through a more critically informed lens—one that allows us to see beyond the constructed histories that have been deployed for tourist consumption, to those histories that have been systematically and willfully suppressed and forgotten.

In recalling Waikīkī's forgotten history, Feeser and Chan reveal in a powerful way the complex intertwining of Native Hawaiian, immigrant, and settler histories on a landscape that has undergone considerable change as a result of prolific develop-

ment. In the chapter titled “Kaneloa and Kapua,” the authors point to several development initiatives that have led to the destruction of the natural environment. Feeser and Chan hone in on structures like the Waikīkī War Memorial Natatorium. Constructed in 1927 as a memorial to Hawai‘i residents who served during the First World War, the natatorium also includes a 100-meter saltwater swimming pool once used by legendary greats such as Duke Kahanamoku. Thus, the site itself constitutes an important remnant of Waikīkī’s recent history. However, as the authors indicate, the natatorium has had a deleterious impact on the Kapi‘olani shoreline due to the erosion it has caused over the years and the problematic algae populations it supports. In an ironic twist, the site has itself come under threat of destruction. While some Hawai‘i residents—particularly those aligned with the Natatorium Preservation Committee—have been agitating for the natatorium to be restored and preserved, other stakeholders, such as environmentalists, are advocating that it be demolished. Thus, as has been the case with so many other important historical sites in the Waikīkī area, the natatorium may soon fall to the wrecker’s ball.

Waikīkī will appeal to a broad range of readers, from those interested in learning about Waikīkī’s local history to those engaged in historic preservation and cultural resource management. *Waikīkī* benefits from Feeser’s eloquent but highly accessible writing style and Chan’s impeccable eye for detail and flare with regard to the book’s design and layout. The authors also provide informative supplementary materials at the back

of the book, including a glossary of Hawaiian vocabulary, a Waikīkī timeline (from AD 300 to 2005), maps of Waikīkī, and a list of prominent historical figures connected to the area. In addition the book includes a comprehensive index of Internet resources that offer guidance for responsible tourism and consumption practices. The authors’ decision to place a list of the images at the end of the book rather than locating individual captions in close proximity to the photographs and figures was somewhat distracting, yet this is but one minor criticism of what otherwise proves to be a highly valuable contribution to literature that examines the impact of tourism and development in Hawai‘i in general and Waikīkī in particular.

The greatest strength of *Waikīkī* lies in its endeavor to raise readers’ consciousness about Waikīkī and the various forces that have shaped it (and, indeed, continue to shape it). The authors highlight the vital need for both residents of Hawai‘i and visitors to take responsibility for their consumption habits and consider the impact of their activities on a beautiful but fragile island environment. While Feeser and Chan accept the fact that many of their readers, including themselves, are entangled in “the colonial and capitalist order” (129), they argue that there are ways and means by which to move beyond it. Indeed, *Waikīkī: A History of Forgetting and Remembering* provides an excellent platform from whence this critical undertaking can begin.

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