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BEYOND HAWAII: NATIVE LABOR IN THE PACIFIC WORLD, GREGORY ROSENTHAL (2018)

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Reviewed by Sebastian Jablonski, University of Potsdam and Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz

In the field of postcolonial studies, the Pacific region is still insufficiently examined, hence Gregory Samantha Rosenthal's outstandingly well-researched book is a particularly important contribution to the existing scholarship. The author zooms in on the struggles and resistance of Hawaiian male labourers in the nineteenth century, a largely understudied topic, as Pacific-related academic literature focuses primarily on the interactions between Indigenous peoples and colonizers, without thoroughly analysing work-based relations. Rosenthal traces Hawaiian proletarians throughout the 'Hawaiian Pacific World' (1) and it is through their hardships the reader experiences the evolution of the (primarily) US American imperial capitalist oppression in the Pacific. Rosenthal's book presents the emergence and development of the Hawaiian labour class from its roots in the early nineteenth-century sandalwood trade, to its downfall at the end of the century due to the immigration of Chinese labourers. Each chapter is titled after a specific person who experienced the Hawaiian working force, either as its member or as its 'overseer'. Maps of the Pacific, Hawaiian islands and California help the reader locate the regions where Hawaiian labourers were employed.

The first chapter, 'Boki's predicament', establishes the origins of the Hawaiian working class and the reforms that shaped its inception. Examining the Hawaiian ruling class, the *ali'i* (chiefs), Rosenthal draws on the example of High Chief Boki, whose aspirations and drive for material possessions propelled his capitalist endeavours to establish a sandalwood trade with European and US American merchants. The author describes the Chief's actions as an 'entryway into understanding the emergence of the Pacific World as an integrated segment of the global capitalist economy, and one in which Hawaiian workers took center stage' (13). Rosenthal outlines the gradual transition of the *maka'āinana* (commoners) into *corvée* labourers and then into wage labourers working for the *ali'i*, who became gradually more indebted to the United States.

The author's considerations of these origins are particularly interesting for scholars engaging with the history of Indigenous-Euro(-American) mercantile exchanges, as they clarify the native labour mechanisms, which are fundamental for the establishment of these transactions. In particular, the 1840s Ka

Māhele (The Division) reform, a 'plan to convert millions of acres of common lands into private property' (43), is an important reoccurring topic throughout the book. In this context, the author shows how the Hawaiian State turned a formerly common land into a commodity, a process that characterized the European capitalist-colonizers' perception of the land as property. Rosenthal unveils the connection between the imposition of this foreign conception of land and the people's labour, which is likewise transformed into a commodity. In this way, a new working class is created. The subsequent chapters depict the landless Hawaiian proletariat's ventures into the world of waged labour.

Chapter two, 'Make's dance', is devoted to the Hawaiian workers' struggles on foreign whaling ships. The harsh world of these seamen abused by foreigners and alienated by their own people is investigated in the context of mobility, which is interpreted by Rosenthal as Indigenous resistance. The 'proletarian whale dance' is an allegory of this mobility and is a sign of resistance to the oppression by the colonizers as well as *ali'i* (80). Indeed, this resistance was a countermeasure to the widely held beliefs among Europeans and US Americans that the Indigenous Pacific people were static and bound to their islands.

Rosenthal challenges more prejudices in light of this Indigenous mobility. Chapter three, 'Kealoha in the Arctic', discusses how the Hawaiians confronted the colonizers' perception of their bodies firstly as unfit for work in cold climates and secondly as emasculated by white men. This second aspect is especially important to the author, who seeks to 're-member' to history the Hawaiian workers through 'indigenous articulations of native masculinity' (4). Herein lies this reader's only criticism of this book, namely, that the Hawaiian proletarians are presented as male only. The author mentions women only in passing and solely in connection with their status as family members, peddlers or prostitutes. Rosenthal's reasoning understandably functions as a counter-narrative to the imperial perceptions of Pacific peoples as effeminate. Yet, the scholar's un-Othering of the Hawaiian males, especially when criticizing that the traditionally 'female occupations such as cooking, cleaning, and mending were tasked to the people of color' (90), can be read as implying that these roles are strictly feminine. The un-Othering of men is thus in places done at the cost of Othering women.

Chapter four, 'Kailiopio and the tropicbird', leaves the ocean voyages and focuses on the life of guano miners. Rosenthal uses Thomas Andrew's concept of 'workspace' to denote the shifting environment of the guano industry and the correlations between physical, cultural and linguistic spaces. Such workspace as defined by these correlations consists of bilingual contracts, unfair wages and bird ecologies, all of which form the background of the expanding US capitalist imperialism. The inclusion of a transcript of such a bilingual contract on page 210 is particularly revealing, as it shows how the Euro-American agent was free to alter its terms of employments according to the circumstances before it was signed by the Indigenous worker.

In the following chapter, 'Nahoa's tears', Rosenthal switches from the guano islands to California and the aftermath of the mid-nineteenth-century gold rush. The scholar also points out the shift of Hawaiian 'wage-working' class into 'lumpenproletariat' (133). The latter lives in increasingly precarious conditions in the newly established Californian cities, unable to find employment after the deindustrialization following the end of the gold rush. Rosenthal shows the traumatic impact of this gradual change on the Hawaiian

migrants, who are ashamed to return home empty-handed, but who are at the same time building new, vibrant diasporic communities. By discussing these people's presence in California, as part of their 'Hawaiian Pacific World', Rosenthal provides a significant overview of the influence they had on the establishment and incorporation of this US American frontier.

Chapter six, 'Beckwith's Pilikia', focuses on Hawai'i's growing sugar industry and takes as its case study George Beckwith, a *haole* (foreigner) manager of the Haiku Sugar Company plantation. This chapter explores the ultimate collapse of the Hawaiian working class, as it was gradually substituted by Chinese labourers. Aside from the capitalist aspects of the sugar economy, Rosenthal returns to the issues of the perception of bodies. In the mid-nineteenth century, Pacific peoples were increasingly portrayed by Europeans and US Americans as diseased and dying out. In this context, the plantation owners transported more Chinese workers to replace the (allegedly) withering Indigenous workforce. The author describes the cultural clashes between the Hawaiians and the Chinese, both burdened by the financially unfair labour under *haole* employers, which lead to increasing resentment between these two groups. At the same time, the colonizers' construction of the dying islanders' image gave the Indigenous ruling class hope 'that Chinese "blood" would reinvigorate the nation' (201). The author thus presents the rivalry between Euro-American and Hawaiian capitalists to make a profit, together with the latter's efforts to ensure the survival of the state and by extension the seemingly perpetual increase of such profits.

Rosenthal's excellent study of the Hawaiian nineteenth-century working class from its inception to its dissolution is particularly relevant for understanding the undercurrents of past imperialistic capitalist oppression. The 're-membering' of this community is a significant step in the development of this neglected area within postcolonial studies, one which will hopefully inspire future researchers to engage in Rosenthal's pursuit of epistemological justice.