

Hau'ofa's Hope

Association for Social Anthropology in Oceania

2009 Distinguished Lecture

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The editors of Oceania are pleased to be able to publish this year's ASAO distinguished lecture. It is the first of what will be a yearly occurrence.

I am grateful for the invitation to address the Association for Social Anthropology in Oceania (ASAO) as its Distinguished Lecturer—especially since my relation to Pacific scholarship has always been rather unprofessional, or at least spotty. I like to think of myself as an amateur—in a sense that comes through best in the French *amateur*: one who loves. Someone who cultivates a study or art from taste or attraction rather than professionally. (I pass over another meaning, more prominent in the English language dictionaries: 'a person who does something more or less unskillfully.') So I address you as a non-specialist, amateur of the Pacific—a fellow-traveler perhaps, in that vast space.

But while I may not have much new to say, for this audience, about Island Pacific societies or histories, I may be able to suggest ways that the region and some of its distinctive problems and theorists have been generative for thinking about broad issues: the nature and diversity of indigeneity today, scale-making in various globalizing socio-cultural processes, the inventive dynamism of tradition, and the question of what might be called differential historicities. By that I mean ways of telling large scale stories about where we—always a contested pronoun—have come from and are going, separately and together. Preparing this talk has made me realize how much of what I find most useful for thinking through our current utopic/dystopic moment has come from the Pacific—from a uniquely rich scholarly fusion of ethnography with history, and from inspirational scholars, writers, activists and students—some, but not all of whom, I'll be able to mention tonight.

So I offer this address in a spirit of gratitude. But also, I confess, with a certain irritation. When I was contacted about doing the lecture, I thought: 'Ah ASAO. An exotic locale. Preferably in Hawaii, or at least Southern California—somewhere near a beach with warm water.' Well, I hope foggy Santa Cruz seems exotic enough to you at least.

Lacking my usual excuse—that a trip away from home would be too disruptive in the midst of a hectic academic term—I yielded to my election. But I said that I couldn't, for lack of time, come up with something really appropriate to the Pacific, so I would need to speak from my current research on indigenous heritage politics in Alaska. No doubt the general issues would resonate.

And then—seduced by that liquid and expansive word 'Oceania' in the name ASAO—it seemed to me that my current Alaska work was, after all, in the Pacific. It's centered on people and histories on and around Kodiak Island in the Gulf of Alaska, facing south toward Hawaii. And if Highland New Guinea can be part of Oceania, why not Kodiak—its people having lived for so long with and from the Ocean, its currents, storms, drifting and swimming creatures?

I recalled the Kodiak area's devastating 20th Century volcanic eruptions and earthquakes along the "ring of fire." Geologically, it's a very Pacific place...however far North... Others

have questioned how ‘the Pacific’ or ‘Oceania’ got reduced to the *South Pacific* (and well before James Michener’s *Tales...*)—how a ‘tropical’ region was identified where the waters could only be warm. The ocean is both cold and warm, of course. Birds, so prominent in Greg Denning’s *Beach Crossings* (and how *he* will be missed...) follow the summer over vast distances from North to South and back again. You may recall how the golden plover’s migrations connect Alaska with Hawaii and the Marquesas in this vision of a Pacific history of crossings—times and places (Denning 2004).

Speaking of history: Alaska, of course, has its share of the Captain Cook epic. And its coastal tribes were important players in the intercultural political-economy of the North Pacific and China, an Oceanic story brilliantly mapped by Marshall Sahlins in his 1988 essay, ‘Cosmologies of Capitalism’ (Sahlins 2000). In the nineteenth century, how many Islanders reached Alaska on the whaling and merchant ships they crewed? And much earlier, did the Pacific navigators make it to the Aleutians? Some of you can no doubt fill me in. My knowledge of this history and of the relevant winds and currents isn’t adequate.

As for currents—it’s well documented that those great trees that wash out of Alaska’s rivers found their ways to islands south, where some were used to make the largest of the great Hawaiian war canoes. And in 1990, when The Polynesian Voyaging Society decided to build a new canoe, *Hawai’iloa*, entirely from traditional materials it turned to Native Alaskan allies for large enough logs, the koa forests of Hawaii no longer containing adequate supplies.

World War Two in the Pacific Theatre: what about the forgotten Aleutian campaigns? Southwest Alaska, Kodiak and the Aleutians would be heavily militarized—with transformative consequences comparable to those in the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, or New Caledonia. And today Kodiak Island hosts the largest US Coast Guard base, patrolling a vast area north of Hawaii. There’s also a missile launching range on one of the island’s southern peninsulas. It was originally destined for private satellites, but now is part of the ‘Star Wars’ missile defense program, linking the Marshall Islands, Hawaii, Alaska and Vandenberg Air Force Base not far down the coast from Santa Cruz, where we are right now. These days no one will be surprised to hear that there are Samoan communities in Anchorage, Filipinos in Kodiak, as well as plenty of North-South traffic to Alaska along the Pacific Rim from Central and South America: folks working in fisheries, service industries, the military, etc. This northern coast is not really a remote place in The Sea of Islands.

The Sea of Islands. You were probably wondering when I’d get to Epeli Hau’ofa. I had planned to at least invoke his expansive vision of ‘Oceania’ to justify discussing Kodiak/Alaska in the ASAO Distinguished Lecture. But his recent passing has returned me to those seminal writings, read afresh in a new Hawaii Press edition, *We Are the Ocean* (Hau’ofa 2008). In the process, Hau’ofa has become central to the talk in a way I hadn’t planned. I hope you’ll see it as an appropriate tribute to a great visionary of our time. (And I might add that what I’ll be saying is entirely based on his writings. I never knew Hau’ofa, as many of you did. So I hope what follows will ring, more or less, true.) I will, after some tacking, land us in Alaska, there to encounter the same tensions that generated ‘Our Sea of Islands’—structure and transformation, determinism and emergence, pessimism and hope.

But allow me to continue in a personal vein for a bit more. Epeli Hau’ofa is one of three Island Pacific influences that have guided and challenged my thinking. The second is Jean-Marie Tjibaou, whom I knew in the late seventies when I was writing about Maurice Leenhardt and New Caledonia (Clifford 1982). His essays, interviews and speeches, collected and introduced by Alban Bensa and Eric Wittershiem, have finally appeared in English (Tjibaou 2005). And Eric Waddell’s intellectual biography is just out from Hawaii (2008).

Tjibaou and Hau’ofa shared an expansive regional vision, an alter-globalization. Each in his own way was bent on reinventing the Pacific Way in new circumstances. Post independence euphoria was gone, and they confronted the structural realities of neocolonialism and globalization, along with their possibilities. Both were committed to the renewal and transformation of local traditions, to strengthened ‘indigenous’ spaces. And both refused to be

limited by exclusivist ethnic or national politics, projecting (if the oxymoron be allowed) 'indigenous cosmopolitan' visions.

There would be lot to say, given the time, about Tjibaou and Hau'ofa: the political situations and histories of New Caledonia and Fiji and how these conditioned the manner of their thinking and activism, the Christian elements in their expansive localisms, or perhaps better, their immanent universalisms. We can only hope that their thinking—expressed in prose, poetry, fiction, speeches and interviews—having now been collected and published, will resonate beyond island Pacific contexts. They have a lot to say wherever small nations and societies are struggling for ways to dwell, to find breathing space in global fields of power, somehow on their own terms.

The third Pacific influence I want to mention briefly is not an individual but a network. It started with Vince Diaz who, as a student from Guam at the University of Hawaii, heard Stuart Hall give a lecture. Inspired by the vision of talking theory without losing one's soul, he applied to our PhD program at UCSC. Teresia Teaiwa followed soon after, then Kehaulani Kauanui, April Henderson, Pam Kido, and Noleani Goodyear Kaopua. I am still processing what I learned from these students. Vince and Kehaulani organized a conference on 'Native Pacific Cultural Studies on the Edge' held at Santa Cruz which brought together a group of younger scholars who had already been meeting at conferences all over the Pacific (Diaz and Kauanui 2001). In the midst of this remarkable gathering, it dawned on me that our program, and I as an academic advisor, had been efficiently interpellated by a dynamic social network: 'simultaneously displaced and recruited' I said in my comments at the time (Clifford 2001: 484).

It was Teresia who gave me Hau'ofa's 'Sea of Islands' essay not long after its first publication. In practice, scholarship doesn't so much *advance as get around*. Where do books and ideas flow, and where is the passage sticky, blocked? We know there are restrictive, institutional networks of publication, translation and dissemination, as analyzed in Pascale Casanova's *The World Republic of Letters* (2005). And we know the global, post/neocolonial routes that channel younger scholars from peripheral places to powerful centers. Yet these material structures of translation, travel, and interpellation are not the only circuits.

It is necessary to pay attention not just to regulated global systems but also to contingent connections and emerging webs of influence. There was no structural reason why UCSC should have become a node in the network of an Island Pacific cultural studies scholarship in the making. It took person-to-person ties—the friendships, communications, alliances and world-making projects of a far-flung community of younger intellectuals. Teresia Teaiwa is explicit about these processes of travel, translation, and congregation in her pointed contribution to the conference just mentioned (Teaiwa 2001).

My immediate point, now, is that there was no reason—given my academic and intellectual connections, expectations, and areas of sanctioned ignorance—that I should have known in 1994 about the publication in Suva of *A New Oceania: Rediscovering Our Sea of Islands* (Waddell, Naidu, and Hau'ofa 1993). A collective project, this 25th Anniversary Publication of the University of the South Pacific listed twenty authors and three editors. *A New Oceania* gathered commentaries around Hau'ofa's famous essay (along with poems and quotations from various Pacific authors—including Tjibaou). It wasn't widely distributed or even well glued together (my copy has now fallen apart). A truly local production, the book had to be delivered by hand. Its arrival in Santa Cruz is an academic case of informal import-export that parallels Hau'ofa's emblematic Tongan friend, shuttling between Berkeley and Fiji with coolers full of kava, T-shirts, and seafood.

'Our Sea of Islands' (1993) would be followed by three companion essays: 'The Ocean in Us' (1997), 'Pasts to Remember' (2000), and 'Our Place Within' (2003). This linked series of meditations, has helped us see, and give proper weight to, all sorts of connections and crossings, old and new, heroic and mundane: travels around work, religion, adventure, family, business and art. Hau'ofa traced movements that have built bigger spaces, dynamic connections in both space and time. These world-making, globalizing, projects are enmeshed

in powerful, large-scale webs of transport, labor migration, missionization and education. They are aligned and limited by colonial and neocolonial structures while also using them for divergent purposes—inflecting, exceeding, passing through.

It all adds up to a utopia of sorts, which many of us share with Hau'ofa. And we do so, of course, with differing degrees of skepticism, ambivalence, pessoptimism (as Edward Said might have put it). For example Margaret Jolly's (2001) complex and engaged critique affirms the vision's importance while bringing out its uneven relevance for distinct Pacific populations and the discrepant pressures (colonial, neocolonial, national) on past and present mobility. But whatever tensions it put on hold, Hau'ofa's hope, tempered by modesty and a self-limiting sense of humor, decisively countered a wet-blanket 'realism' we're all familiar with: a historical perspective in which the capitalist world system determines and incorporates everything...at least in the proverbial 'last analysis.' Hau'ofa would claim another, more open-ended form of realism (and realism is not incompatible with vision, as Marx himself demonstrated).

Hau'ofa's writings recognize alternatives that are emergent, vernacular and real, already happening and going somewhere—somewhere that's not easily subsumed by structural forces like modernization, global capital, or postmodernity, but that are not disconnected from them either. Hau'ofa's story loops and wanders in exploratory parallels. It makes imaginative space for worlding projects at varying scales (Connery and Wilson 2007). I think of these as big-enough histories, able to account for a lot, but not everything—and without guarantees of political virtue. Hau'ofa's 'Oceania' project might be contrasted, for example, with a range of contemporary indigenous movements; with expansive, regionalizing forms of Islam and Christianity; with international Feminist networks and women's organizations; with the loose alliances being forged under the aegis of NGO-led environmentalism or the World Social Forum.

Among these recognizable world-making projects we might include the extraordinary example of the *Oceania Centre for Arts and Culture*, tucked away in a corner of the USP Campus in Suva, gathering, connecting, and radiating Oceanic strands of creativity and influence. A node in the proliferating circuits of contemporary indigenous art, the Centre has been resolutely local and regional in scale, expansive but without a website. Its spirit is eloquently expressed in Hau'ofa's 'Our Place Within.' And Geoffrey White's introduction to the Hawaii Press collection gives a vivid sense of the perpetually improvised, creative and unpretentiously radical style of the place.

Eveli Hau'ofa's vision of a New Oceania, combined roots in land with routes across the sea, deep local histories with expansive social trajectories beyond every form of containment. He didn't so much escape or transcend nations, ethnicities, and the capitalist world system as find ways around and through them, energies that pointed in old/new/other directions. The vision was, and remains, profoundly hopeful. But it bears emphasizing that this isn't the utopianism of an epochal break—a revolutionary, 'whole new' future, leaving behind present divisions. Hau'ofa's sense of possibility, was grounded in history's multiple threads, continuities-in-transformation, as these are rewoven in repeated social practices. The vision extrapolated from what people were already doing—translations, articulations, performances of what had been done many times before, now engaged with new technologies, communications, social scales. It suggests a deep historical attachment: a *longue durée*, but not a return to origins or a developmental teleology. The historicity, a mix of cycles and lines, of returns and forward movements, is what Hau'ofa, in 'Pasts to Remember,' figures as a spiral. Reminiscent of Kamau Brathwaite's Caribbean 'tidalectics' (DeLoughrey 2007) this way of conceiving history could not be trapped by the binaries of myth vs history, culture vs economy, poetry vs. science.

All of this is good to think with—or good to hope with.

But we hope, as Marx might put it, in conditions not of our choosing.

I want to return us to the constitutive tension, embedded in a particular time and region,

that generated the vision. Hau'ofa was, of course, reacting against quite specific forms of political-economic realism that have certainly not lost their relevance and force. More than once, even as he discovers and articulates his visionary voice, Hau'ofa reminds us of this other perspective and of the need to temper its power. He does not seek to refute or dismiss it.

At the University of the South Pacific in the 1980s political-economic rigor took the form of Dependency Theory: an account of the trap in which the so-called MIRAB nations of the Pacific were caught (MIRAB: Migration, Remittances, Aid, Bureaucracy). Their seemingly inescapable fate was belittlement. We're all familiar with Hau'ofa's alternative: his substitution of 'our sea of islands' for those tiny 'islands in a distant sea' (as they must appear in a Eurocentric World System). This critique of belittlement remains crucial wherever bottom-up social movements or new indigenous projects are understood to be mere epiphenomena, functionally contained by global or state structures. Hau'ofa helps us see that more is going on: dynamic and contradictory processes. (Alaska will shortly provide examples.)

The new University of Hawaii Press edition makes Hau'ofa's key intervention and its subsequent ramifications widely available for the first time. But my gratitude is tempered somewhat by the way the new edition helps us forget the text hand-delivered from Suva to Santa Cruz, fifteen years ago. Many of you, I assume, have seen this little volume—a collage of poetry, quotations, and individual responses to Hau'ofa's seminal essay followed by an afterword by the author (not, alas, reprinted). The lumpy ensemble gives a vivid sense of USP's first twenty-five years as a catalytic Pacific place: a site of new regional identifications and polemics.

In the book's varied reactions to 'Our Sea of Islands' there's a lot of affection for a cherished colleague. But one can't help feeling throughout a sense that maybe Epeli had gone a bit soft, or off the deep end... There are a lot of 'yes but' replies. Yes, this is a good corrective, but really, Pacific island societies are, in fact, small, dependent, and in the grip of relentless forces. A few quotations:

Sudesh Mishra: I concede Hau'ofa's point. I am moved by his enthusiasm and celebration of Oceania. Yet the nagging sense that real power radiated from metropolitan centres won't go away, and no matter how adaptable and mobile Oceanic peoples may be, it is too simplistic to say that we have more than a theoretical control over our destiny..." (Waddell, Naidu, Hau'ofa, eds. 1993:21-22).

The objections range from gentle dissent like this one to frontal assault.

Joeli Veitayaki notes that Hau'ofa has for years been saying that Pacific nations are becoming integrated in 'a single Australia and New Zealand dominated regional economy. Now to please his students [he]...comes up with this new perspective, which I think is mostly superficial and unrealistic, certainly severed from the situation in the Pacific' (p. 116). The way forward, for Veitayaki, is to control island destinies with strengthened national sovereignties while working for development through existing international institutions.

Vanessa Griffin agrees on the need for hopeful visions, but insists on also confronting a darker present. Drawing on her work with Pacific women's organizations, she juxtaposes the following to Hau'ofa's stories of expansive Oceanic crossings:

Read Mari Sasabe's study of women working in a Japanese canning factory in Solomon Islands: read of the early morning boat trip at 4 in the morning, the wait in the cold for a bus for a one hour bus trip to the factory, and then the hours of work, cutting and sluicing fish for the Japanese owned factory before the repeat journey home, in reverse, at night. These are islanders too, real islanders living on two islands away from the factory, going to it by boat and bus, for a lack of choice and a need for cash (p. 63).

Many other colleagues weigh in, with differing, ambivalent tones.

Hau'ofa's afterword, 'A Beginning,' anticipates his subsequent essays and also provides a fuller sense of the historical conjuncture—the situation at USP in post-coup Fiji and throughout the region. Hau'ofa's portrait of the university in the mid 1980s is grim. And the problem is deeper than the pervasive 'despondency theory' (as Sahlins, who was in conversation with Hau'ofa at the time, would later call it).

When I first came in 1975, the campus was abuzz with creativity and wide-ranging discussions generated by the emergence of the Pacific Way....By the early 1980s the lines of engagement had shifted with the increasing awareness of the neocolonial grip on our economies and politics, of the hosts of liberation struggles in the Third World, and of the intensified Reagan-led cold-war campaign against "evil empires." Neo-Marxism of the Third World variety, an even larger idea than the Pacific Way, breached our campus to join battle with our home-grown ideology. The debates, tinged eventually by racism and intolerance of opposing views, deteriorated into charges and counter-charges of "false consciousness", and into unbridled expressions of petty personal animosities. It reached a stage when death threats were issued. *It was a pity because underneath the bickering were real alternative visions of our region* (p. 127, emphasis added).

'Real alternative visions....' A seminar series is organized at USP to bring into constructive dialogue the differing perspectives. It begins well, he recalls, but is almost immediately quashed in May 1987, by Fiji's military coup. 'Calm immobility' follows: routinized, safe, depressing.

But Hau'ofa is beginning to nurture a different vision. It won't spring into view until 1993 when he delivers the ASAO Distinguished Lecture at the King Kamehameha Hotel in Kona, Hawaii. Actually he delivers a rather conventional talk there on Tongan aristocracy and democratization. But then, on his 'road to Damascus,' as he famously calls it—driving across the immense volcanic landscape of the Big Island to Hilo and another lecture date—Hau'ofa's vision of Pacific scale and dynamism erupts. In a white heat, he dashes off a new talk, and the rest we know: the visionary is born. This Christian/indigenous rebirth (richly developed by Rob Wilson in his forthcoming book, *Be Always Converting, Be Always Converted*, 2009) is unforgettably narrated at the beginning of 'Our Sea of Islands.' Hau'ofa's essay, first delivered at Hilo, repeated in Honolulu, would be published almost immediately in the USP anniversary polylogue.

I want to shift our focus and dwell for a moment on this latter context of emergence, an origin story rooted in ideological tension rather than sublime nature or spiritual epiphany. It is the conjuncture featured in Hau'ofa's afterword—a clash, but also potential dialogue, of 'real alternative visions of our region.' Writing against violent assertions of Fijian nativism, Hau'ofa evokes really existing practices of coexistence and hospitality, of live and let live. He draws on his own life experiences as a multilingual, multiply located traveling-native of Oceania to sketch counter-histories, alternatives to the coercive norms of both ethnonationalist exclusivity and economic developmentalism. He brings culture and tradition decisively into the picture, powerful, constitutive forces which, he understands, have the potential to both unite and divide. There is no way forward without them. 'Any new perspective on ourselves,' he writes, 'must be based to a large extent on our roots. We should look into our histories and traditions, as well as into other cultures, for ideas and inspiration' (Hau'ofa 1993: 128).

At USP, manifestations by students of their cultural traditions appear to many progressives as retrograde, dangerously divisive forms of identity politics—a critique we're very familiar with today. For Hau'ofa such an attitude suppresses a crucial resource for self-confidence and for making something different from the current reality 'which is largely a creation of imperialism.'

By deliberately omitting our changing traditions from serious discourses, especially at the School of Social and Economic Development, we tend to overlook the fact that most people are still using and adapting them as tools for survival, and, more seriously, we lose our ability to read the signs and spot quickly and early the subtle ways in which some of our leaders are manipulating them, and then scurry everywhere drumming up feeble support. I believe that we should pay a great deal more intellectual attention and commitment to our cultures than we have done, otherwise we could easily become V. S. Naipaul's mimic men and mimic women...(p. 129).

The invocation of Naipaul reminds us that Hau'ofa, an anthropology student in Canada, did fieldwork in Trinidad where he found inspiration in the author's humorous and biting satiric early novels. And in the Caribbean he encountered another form of non-continental region-making, or 'archipelagic' consciousness, as Edouard Glissant would put it. I recall that when Hau'ofa's 'Sea of Islands' reached Santa Cruz in the mid 1990s I was engaged with Paul Gilroy's map/history of a 'Black Atlantic,' deployed against ethnic absolutism, and offering a counter-history of capitalist, nation-state genealogies of modernity (Gilroy 1999). The two critical region- and scale-making projects resonated strongly across all the differences of North Atlantic and Pacific post- and neo-colonial histories. (DeLoughrey, 2007, explores these synergies and tensions with great subtlety.)

The 1980s and 90s, were, of course, moments of neoliberal hegemony, of Thatcher's famous 'TINA... There Is No Alternative,' Fukayama's 'End of History.' A flexibly accumulating, expansive post-Fordist capitalism seemed capable of restructuring, interpellating, commodifying virtually anything, anywhere. These were decades of demoralization on the Left. Dependency Theory (linked, early on, with ideologies of Third World resistance) had evolved into debilitating forms of pessimism about the prospects for genuinely democratic transformations.

In 1993 how could this 'Sea of Islands,' stitched together from below, claim to be realistic—a project actually going somewhere in History? The twenty respondents in *A New Oceania* were seduced, but ambivalent. Surely this was just whistling in the neoliberal wind.... And then, in the book's final pages, came Hau'ofa's declaration of independence (he had just invoked the Kula Ring and Malinowski's Argonauts, as an expansive model for Oceania): 'Romantic Nonsense—So be it.'

How should we understand this 'So be it?' A kind of deliberate (or reckless) suspension of disbelief? Hau'ofa's earlier writings had been there, done that with hard-nosed political economic realism. And now the imaginative, ironic freedom opened up by his satirical fiction—*Tales of the Tikongs*, *Kisses in the Nederends*—was pulling elsewhere. Anyway, he knew for sure that there would be enough pessimism to go around. Henceforth, he would work the optimistic side of the street pretty much full time.

'Romantic Nonsense?' Well, romanticism has always been an integral, but often a dissonant, part of capitalist modernity. And nonsense is, after all, the trickster's principal weapon. Perhaps Hau'ofa's critical pessimism had been transmuted into a certain irony, that inimitable light touch and sense of the absurd (surely a Pacific style, if I may be permitted an essentialist moment) that cuts everything and everyone down to size.

The way forward, an Oceanic *modus vivendi* expressed in his subsequent essays, has proved inspiring for many of us struggling to imagine alternate ways through capitalist postmodernity. Yet the constitutive tensions that run through the USP volume have not gone away. Quite the contrary. As I re-read *A New Oceania*, I'm drawn less to the conversion experience on the road to Hilo and more to that moment in 1987, the arguments at USP so abruptly shut down. Hau'ofa clearly regrets a lost opportunity to grapple together with 'real alternative visions of our region'—an opportunity to inhabit, attentively, the contradictions of different historical dynamics. A dialectical realism, without transcendence.

I have come to see those tensions in the USP book as expressing fundamental, inescapable antinomies of our historical moment. We live with, work through and around them, but cannot get clear. They disrupt our renewed, never-successful attempts to align different spatiotemporal scales and projects: to join structure with process, determination with emergence, system with excess, macro-economics with micro-ethnography, History (capital H) with histories (final s). We operate, Stuart Hall always reminds us, on shifting, contradictory terrains. And, as Anna Tsing insists, at multiple, incongruous scales (Hall 1996; Tsing 2002).

I had conceived this lecture as a demonstration of this predicament, using the tensions and contradictions of my research on indigenous heritage projects in and around Kodiak Alaska. But thinking about Epeli Hau'ofa set me on a different tack. Those Oceanic currents...

My time is limited, so let me just give you a glimpse of the kinds of antinomies, and problems of representation, at issue there. I would have told two stories about the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1970 (ANCSA) an event that has profoundly inflected the course of Native histories. You may recall that this land settlement gave nearly a billion dollars (back when a billion was real money) and a lot of land to Alaska Natives—a condition of building the oil pipeline from the recent discoveries in Prudhoe Bay all the way to Valdez in Prince William Sound. The prior decade had seen a growing movement of Native land-claims and the formation of a pan-Alaskan alliance, The Alaska Federation of Natives. This movement hung together and eventually forced a global settlement rather than the piecemeal buy-offs that would otherwise have gotten the pipeline through. What seemed to be a big success came with a price: extinction of all other claims to land in Alaska (with allowances for traditional subsistence uses); and the land and funds were given to *Native Corporations*. To participate in the settlement individuals had to establish their tribal affiliations (showing at least ¼ blood quantum) and sign up as shareholders in appropriate regional and local corporations. The idea was to give Native Alaskans a real stake in development making them self-sufficient in the modern economy (while relieving the State of welfare obligations). Opinions on the great 'social experiment' of ANCSA—the uneven performance of the corporations (despite bailouts from powerful allies like Ted Stevens) and their problematic relation to other forms of Native authority—remain, to say the least, mixed. ANCSA has been amended, and no doubt will be again. But Native Corporations are now a fact of life in Alaska (and beyond, as the more successful, diversify their activities from local timber and mining into areas like global telecommunications). Annual distributions to Native shareholders all over the state, supporting programs in health, and social services, as well as heritage renewal projects such as the Alutiiq Museum in Kodiak, make a difference. How much and at what cost...?

One story about ANCSA sees a pact with the capitalist devil and ultimately a loss of sovereignty as indigenous Alaskans are contained and subordinated by relationships they can never control. Another sees a strategic adoption of corporate structures for purposes of advancing the common good, making the best of an ambiguous new situation and exercising power at new scales? In Pacific terms, should we think of this as development or 'development', in Sahlins' (2000: 419) localized Pidgin spelling? Was ANCSA the result of Alaska Native power flexing its muscles at a new state-level—a land-claims movement holding powerful oil companies and their pipeline hostage? Or was it the flexible interpellation of Alaska's diverse and localized Native peoples into the structures of liberal governance, a managed multiculturalism?

The Native people on and around Kodiak Island were once named Aleuts or Koniags by Russian invaders, and later Pacific Eskimos by anthropologists. Some of them have, at times, thought of themselves as Russian. Now most call themselves Alutiiq. Is their recent emergence as one of Alaska's publicly recognized Native peoples a product of the ANCSA moment and the proliferation of so called identity politics in Alaska, with its selective reclamations of tradition and performances of heritage, in new, but circumscribed, public arenas? Or is this a

transformative revival, reweaving surviving elements of language, kinship, religion, subsistence, senses of place, forms of craft and art. In the latter perspective we would need to be attentive to old and new situations of performance, communication, and translation, as well as new scales of identification and diaspora.

Preceding ANCSA, what kind of historical narrative can account for the existence of Alutiiq Native religion: Russian Orthodoxy? Surely not a story of assimilation or before/after conversion, but rather a tangled tale of specific articulations, accommodations, and partial translations—a story whose fascinating details I can't get into now. Russian Orthodoxy in Alaska, as much scholarship has shown, was dramatically indigenized, becoming a source of social distinction and relative power (Black 2004; Fienup-Riordan 1990; Oleksa 1992). You can imagine how a localized Russian religion, after 1867 when the Russians themselves departed and the more invasive Americans moved in, could function as a site of disarticulation from the new imperial hegemony.

Native Orthodoxy is not, however, a story of separatism, but of constrained maneuver within changing material pressures. Russia Imperial practice favored intermarriage and the creation of so called creole elites who played crucial economic, political and religious roles in the empire. It's important to ask how creole hierarchies transformed earlier social stratifications in the Aleutians and Kodiak, and how this accommodation has in turn been transformed by new more explicitly capitalist class positions in the post-ANCSA Native corporations (Mason 2002). And is this the end of the story? Who is using whom in these transformations? Do the new elites function like capitalists elsewhere? What community obligations do the corporations substantially meet? Given the mixed results of Native Corporations in Alaska—a wide range of successes and failures, and an unfinished learning curve—it's hard to say definitively.

There is simply no place of historical hindsight from which to sort out and impose a unified functional structure on these discrepant stories. It's a tangled and unfinished historical reality that I find I can't represent in a seamless way.

At one pole, familiar kinds of world-system functionalism say, in effect: 'If any alternate social or cultural forces exist that do not *transform* the system they must be *part* of the system.' All differences are interpellated or called into being by power (for example, post 1960s identity politics is essentially a kind of managed multiculturalism allowed by, even produced by, post-modern governmental structures). This system-centered view certainly accounts for part of what's being articulated and performed in recent claims for indigenous sociocultural diversity. But it wipes away all the local histories of social negotiation and struggle, transformative continuity and place-based living, denying them any meaningful historical momentum in the contemporary moment. I find myself imagining a tangle of historicities rather than a progressively aligned common History—however combined and uneven its development.

At the other extreme, we're familiar with the positive, often rather self-righteous, stories of local and indigenous cultures persisting, rising from the ashes, reaching back to their pasts to fashion genuine alternatives to the West and its civilizing, modernizing missions. Certainly many of us have, at times told some version of this story. It brings into view inventive, discrepant, social forms. It narrates entangled histories, sometimes of extreme localism, sometimes of a larger sovereignty politics, enacted at national, regional, or international scales. Clearly a lot is going on under the sign of globalization. But whatever hopes (and worries) may be provoked by the interactive survival of local cultures in postmodernity, no clear, really convincing answer is provided for the materialist skeptics who ask whether this really adds up to anything important in a globalizing, capitalist world. Isn't it all basically a way to be different within an inviting, but circumscribed, set of variations, a 'global system of common differences' (Wilk 1995). If everyone gets a culture, an identity, and performative forms of recognition—well, what else is new?

My admittedly ad hoc, under-theorized solution is to always be juxtaposing histories. Always working with more than one.

When it comes to indigenous heritage work (for example the Alutiiq Museum in Kodiak, originally funded by Exxon Valdez Oil Spill compensation funds and now largely by ANCSA Native corporations), I can never say finally whether I'm describing a process of articulation or interpellation. Is heritage best seen as a pragmatic political recombination of existing elements in a new historical field of forces or as a command performance of identity? At worst it's an activity of self-stereotyping in terms recognizable to powerful others, at best a strategic performance translating lost and found traditions for multiple audiences, Native and non-Native. It doesn't help much to say it's always both. You tend to end up in those predictable binaries such as the good news and the bad news, domination and resistance, system and subversion.

Yet that's where we do so often end up. Juxtaposing different stories and analytics. I see no way out of this, if by that we mean coming up with a historical totality, a unidirectional temporal representation at *any* analytic level or socio-spatial scale. Incompleteness, juxtaposition, with ends unwoven and edges rough, is a more realist mode of representation than functional integration, however flexible and dynamic. How can this sense of the real be rendered in our writing and speaking, our showing and telling? I find myself offering experiments and failures not models and successes. The antinomies at issue can't be dialectically sublated: they're constitutive tensions in a paradoxically constrained and excessive historical field of forces.

To understand this constrained openness, I rely on Raymond Williams' account of determination in *Marxism and Literature* (1977)—a matter of pressures and limits not mechanical causation, or before-after, epochal histories. We need a lot of room for complex articulations of what Williams called residual, dominant, and emergent formations. Moreover, the directionality implied by the three terms wavers when (in the spirit of both Walter Benjamin and contemporary indigenous neotraditionalism), it becomes hard to distinguish the residual from the emergent.

I hold onto the notion of an enormously powerful capitalist world system, but a non-functional system (an oxymoron perhaps) that can't claim a global reach, either in descriptive or explanatory registers. I'm looking for a big enough story of capitalism, understood not as a historically dynamic structure driven by its economic engine, but as a variegated formation always already articulated—socially, politically, culturally and economically. I also imagine a world system that can no longer be spatialized into stable cores and peripheries, that is susceptible to deep crises and profound reconfigurations.

In the new millennium, for all the reasons we know so well, neoliberal confidence and imperial geopolitical momentum have been shaken. From the Left it becomes possible again to see around capitalism or at least to imagine its metamorphosis. A sign of the times: Immanuel Wallerstein's *Decline of American Power* (2003). The political/economic structures that sustained the Modern World System for the past 500 years are not sustainable he argues. It can no longer reproduce itself. We are moving into a critical, perhaps prolonged, transition in which political/economic elements that once seemed structural will recede in importance, and more contingent political struggles (without guaranteed outcomes—Right, Left, or otherwise) will decide the new political-economic arrangements. I can't go into the details of his diagnosis, which are certainly contestable. I merely note that the man who conceptualized and described the world system is now prepared to shut it down, or at least to imagine its radical reconfiguration.

I think we all recognize that global arrangements of power are shifting under our feet. And while there is risk of overreaction to what may turn out to be just another systemic, albeit quite deep, crisis—the future does seem more open than at any other time in the post-WW2 era. What real prospects are there, now, for alternate forms of development, of regionalism, of cultural particularity, of variegated sovereignty, of indigenous cosmopolitan links? Is history moving in more than one direction? What will count as realism in this open-ended conjuncture? What big enough stories? Is the present crisis, even chaos, a source of hope or fear? Surely both...

Today, Epeli Hau'ofa's utopia—based on past and present acts of connection that don't align along dominant trajectories of core and periphery, tradition and modernity, local and global—seems more like a history that could find space to grow. It is a hope necessarily entangled with other more ambivalent scenarios and dystopias. 'So be it.'

Let me offer a final image of the utopian. It comes from a past and future California, imagined by another great visionary of the late 20th century, Ursula K. Le Guin. The author of fantasy and science fiction is explicating her extraordinary futurist ethnography of Northern California, *Always Coming Home*, a work that owes an enormous amount to the California Indians and cultures she frequented as the child of Alfred and Theodora Kroeber. Hers is not the familiar kind of utopian thinking—a tradition she identifies as male and Western—that sees time flowing steadily forward and the utopist visionary facing ahead, zooming on his motorcycle into the future. She is trying, she says, for something more shadowed and tangled, a yin, not a yang utopia. Above all the goal has to be a process not an outcome. Moving among multiple centers of history and culture, her utopia is as likely to be found slowing down or veering off as leaping forward. Le Guin:

Copernicus told us that the earth was not the center. Darwin told us that man is not the center. If we listened to the anthropologists we might hear them telling us, with appropriate indirectness, that the White West is not the center. The center of the world is a bluff on the Klamath River, a rock in Mecca, a hole in the ground in Greece, nowhere, its circumference everywhere.

Perhaps the utopist should heed this unsettling news at last. Perhaps the utopist would do well to lose the plan, throw away the map, get off the motorcycle, put on a very strange-looking hat, bark sharply three times, and trot off looking thin, yellow, and dingy across the desert and up into the digger pines (1989: 97-98).

I can see Epeli Hau'ofa, somewhere, wearing that strange-looking hat.

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