

Navigating CHamoru Poetry: Indigeneity, Aesthetics, and Decolonization. By Craig Santos Perez. University of Arizona Press, 2021. 252 pages. \$35.00 paper; \$100.00 cloth; \$35.00 ebook.

Rarticulating one's Native existence in spite of multiple waves and manifestations of colonization represents a critical trajectory of Native resistance and decolonial transformation. Grounded in an Indigenous diasporic CHamoru sensibility, Craig Santos Perez eloquently and steadily interprets, triangulates, and integrates various Native Pacific and CHamoru voices toward a broader expression of CHamoru existence, within the context of a living and breathing history of the Mariana Islands and the CHamoru people.

Perez maps the coordinates of a voyage across CHamoru experiences, articulated through CHamoru literature and poetry, as part of a genealogical tradition of storytelling. Intellectual canons are creatively synthesized and applied, beyond and counter to "fatal impact" theoretical approaches characteristic of earlier scholarship in Native American, Indigenous, and CHamoru studies. Mindful of the traps of fatalistic assumptions about the dismal consequences of Native cultures and identities at the hands of colonial forces, Perez draws on Indigenous studies, articulations theory (Clifford, 2002), and especially the navigation framework of Vicente M. Diaz (2011). Grounded in Indigenous and CHamoru epistemologies, this navigation framework is metaphorically and literally applied, as Perez plots, charts, and sets bearing on a horizon of CHamoru aesthetics and identity, touching down on various destinations of poetic expressions.

In addition to the sheer descriptive and literary contributions to our understanding of CHamoru history, identity, culture, arts, and literature, Perez's work develops a pivotal Indigenous literary method of *wayreading* of CHamoru poetry across thematic destinations including tano (land), guma' latte (precontact house), diaspora, and traditional oral tradition. Derived from the Native Pacific seafaring practice of *wayfinding* in canoe and navigation traditions (Diaz, 2011), wayreading

involves conceptualizing Chamoru cultural identity and literature as complex articulations rather than static entities; centering CHamoru literary creations within Indigenous intellectual, historical, cultural, and political contexts; examining contemporary CHamoru literature through the lens of customary CHamoru oral, visual, and performing arts; and foregrounding the role that CHamoru literature plays in imagining and enacting decolonization. (31)

As Perez takes us on a Native Pacific literary journey of decolonization through the articulations of CHamoru voices, the book chapters specifically embark on a

voyage through literary and literal CHamoru experiences with respect to tano, guma' latte, diaspora, and oral traditions noted above. Key issues and themes cut across the chapter destinations, which form the organization of this review: (1) foregrounded origins and connection; (2) colonial manifestations and decolonization.

Prior to wayreading, each chapter opens with the intention to ground the reader's sensibilities in CHamoru cultural origins of CHamoru creation story (chapter one), guma' latte (chapter two), CHamoru voyaging traditions (chapter three), and CHamoru oral history (chapter four). In so doing, Perez engages in critical historiography and deconstructs "fatal impact narratives" to CHamoru history,

the idea that Pacific Islanders and their cultures were fatally impacted by contact with colonial cultures, and that Pacific Islanders were destined to become assimilated or extinct. Fatal impact theory is based on the conception that Indigenous culture is a static, bounded essence that once existed in a "pure" and "authentic" state before contact but has become degraded and inauthentic because of colonialism, modernity, and globalization. (14)

Perez' first step in contextualizing CHamoru origins grounds our imaginations in Indigenous epistemologies to calibrate our lenses toward transformation and decolonization rooted in a fluid and dynamic notion of CHamoru culture. This is a crucial decolonial and pedagogical technique to connect readers to experiences they might not share or realize, by orienting our vision in favor of CHamoru perspectives to truly listen, as Perez invites us to join in wayreading the stories of CHamoru poets. Cultivating this connection to CHamoru origins is foundational to the purpose of Indigenous storytelling, and necessary for CHamoru narratives to manifest and ultimately connect to ancestors, land, local island communities, and diasporic communities. For instance, Perez states the following in chapter one with respect to contributions of CHamoru women:

. . . I wayread contemporary CHamoru women writers who highlight the articulations of CHamoru culture, identity, and aesthetics through the representations of land, banyan trees, and the creation story.

The poets I discuss in this chapter are C. T. Perez, Kisha Borja-Kicho'cho', and Anghet Hoppe-Cruz, three respected and accomplished CHamoru writers from different generations. By wayreading their work, I will show how they craft a CHamoru eco-poetics to invoke the Punta and Fu'una creation story, to reconnect to i taotaomo'na, to reestablish the central place and power of CHamoru women, and to rearticulate a CHamoru ecological consciousness. (42)

Once grounded in an Indigenous and CHamoru sensibility, Perez exposes key nuanced forms of colonialism beyond more obvious cultural, economic, and political conditions of colonization. Chapter one wayreads on and reveals historical and ongoing colonial devastation to the land of Guahan (Guam) through "ecological imperialism" in forms such as militarization, urbanization, and tourism. Likewise, chapter two exposes

“architectural colonialism” via the disruption of physical, spatial, and cultural structures central to precontact CHamoru houses.

After calibrating our lenses to more critically understand these nuanced colonial disruptions, Perez wayreads CHamoru poetic narratives of decolonization and directly articulates decolonization from his voice as a diasporic CHamoru author. Chapter three outlines a key development in contemporary CHamoru renaissance in the revitalization of Native Pacific voyaging traditions as both a literal practice and a diasporic space to transform the physical displacement of CHamorus off the islands to distant lands, and the colonial restriction of Indigenous seafaring practices itself. This decolonial revitalization of seafaring not only provides a direct connection to precontact practices, but also provides an Indigenous navigation framework and metaphorical understanding to embrace and connect diasporic CHamoru identities.

In closing, Perez contributes arguably among the most comprehensive and deep analyses of CHamoru indigeneity, aesthetics, and decolonization, building on the genealogy of CHamoru literature and synthesizing multiple genres and generations of CHamoru literature. This groundbreaking work moves CHamoru articulations beyond the established discourse of political status and self-determination into a rising CHamoru renaissance, creatively and dynamically triangulating multiple discourses of indigeneity, historiography, cultural identity, and decolonization, in the spirit of perpetuating CHamoru indigeneity.

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