

“Shark God on Trial: Symbolic and (Ill)Legal Acts of Landscape Possession in Postmodern Hawaii”

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ABSTRACT

This paper moves towards establishing a more postmodern notion of justice in the contemporary Asia/Pacific region by challenging the seamless workings of the American literary nation-state with the uncanny return of a “shark god” poem from early nineteenth century Hawaiian literature. The aim is to promote a global sensibility towards the local and local identity in Hawaii as this can be rooted in heteroglossic spatiality, competing language-games, competing languages, and the clashing traditions and heritages of American, Asian and Pacific makeup that demand a postmodern hearing.

KEY WORDS

Hawaii
space
heteroglossia
Asia/Pacific
identity
justice
United States

postmodern
local
Pacific
place
transnational
global
island

"The land, serving as a reference point, in addition to preserving local representations and beliefs (often fragmented and hidden beneath the occupiers' system,) is also a ballast and defense for the 'own' [*le propre*] against any superimposition."

—Michel de Certeau, "The Politics of Silence: The Long March of the Indians,"
Heterologies: Discourse on the Other (229).

I. Hawaii: Islands of Spatial Heteroglossia

Enduring as an island of "local representations and beliefs" in the Pacific as a non-contiguous territory positioned within yet outside the United States mainland cultural hegemony, Hawaii has become by now a thoroughly postmodern island microstate of global cultural flows and local encounters. Inside this contemporary Hawaii of "local motions," to invoke the colorful logo of a North Shore surf shop, distinctive cultural articulations and political-economic entanglements into the transnational marketplace of global tourism and Asia/Pacific exchange are daily intermixed in person, code, and habit. It makes sense to speak of these Hawaiian Islands, then, not so much as a seamlessly confederated U. S. *state*, but, evoking a metaphor of place-bound location I propose to interrogate, undermine, and reinstall in a more compelling sense, as *site of heteroglossic spatiality*.

Hawaii as site of heteroglossic spatiality: if I use such a mangled metaphor to describe this globalized locality, this oddly Bakhtinian/ cum Bachelardian trope of mixed-tongues and phenomenological longings proliferating and binding together around some shared post-immigrant love of local place, style, and custom—resulting in what *Honolulu Magazine* has recently trumpeted to Pacific Rim food lovers is "a new pidgin cuisine"—is meant to figure the Hawaiian Islands into a *quasi-utopic space* of social

transformation and postmodern justice in the Pacific. An island space, that is, as in Sir Thomas More's *Utopia*, potentially outside capitalist regimes of knowledge and power where other stories of place, self, and belonging are being circulated, imagined, and sold.

Fascinating as indigenous and transnational 'contact scene' to culture critics of identity negotiation and the political economy of regal/tourist grandeur as diverse as Marshall Sahlins (1985; Kirch and Sahlins, 1992) and Andrew Ross (1994), modern Hawaii glories in the production of a "local culture" (and, recently as well, "local literature" movement [see Sumida [1991]; Wilson, 1995; Fujikane [1994]]) that has resulted from some conjunctive compound of Native, European, American and Asian/Pacific makings. Given this internal flourishing of heteroglossic and non-Hegelian "little" narratives (see Godzich, introduction to *Heterologies*) of location, selfhood, and community in Hawaii, as well as the contemporary instability of the U.S. nation-state within the porous and libidinal economy of *transnationalization*, the postmodern condition of statehood lurches towards the year 2000 as a condition of heightened risk, (in) tolerance of others, re-assembly, de-mastery, semiotic escape from statist captures of self/identity by the "abstract machine" of binary codifications, and fractal restructurations of place and *ethnos*. "It is a period of drifting, of 'deterritorialization.'" to invoke the post-Nietzschean optimism of Gilles Deleuze ("Nomad Thought," 144; *Dialogues*, 146-147) and his all-too-romantic exaggeration of the nomadic fragment as revolutionary energy release from the logic of the capitalist nation-state.

The Hawaiian islands, as site of such postmodern contradiction, comprise one of those uneven *interzones* of cultural hybridity, border speculation, transculturation and subnational contact where different tongues and languages, elite and pidgin; far-flung customs and disjunctive styles of cultural endurance; disparate communal mythologies of origin, selfhood, nation, and cosmic teleology have long mingled, mangled, and coalesced in the Asia-Pacific (see Mary Louise Pratt [1992] on such South American encounters). Thus, in so many impure ways, the burdens of world history have come to some pragmatic resolution into a multicultural, or at least non-monological, paradise-on-earth. To quote Paul Theroux in *Happy Isles of Oceania* (1992), thrilled to be back home again in the Hawaiian Islands after his ethnographic gourmet cruise around the Pacific of Gauguin, Malinowski, and Robert Louis Stevenson on an inflatable raft, "Honolulu may be the most successful multiracial culture in the world. At least, I have not seen another to rival it" (477). This is what the globe-hopping Theroux warily concludes, after enduring strained racial encounters with an array of "xenophobic

islanders" (355) and some SPAM-eating ex-cannibals in the far-flung Pacific, especially Samoa (see Paul Lyons on Theroux's late-imperial tourist modes and cannibal jokes and longings replayed from *Typee*) which he dreaded as a land of bullies and football recruits.

Inside the multicultural polity of Hawaii, however, so this more upbeat vision of spatial heteroglossia implies, after two hundred years of prolonged immigrant contact, liberal contracts, commercial abundance, and progressive democratization, Caliban, Prospero and Miranda have courted, married, intermixed, and begotten lovely children named, say, *Calibanos Prosperity Scorese-Chun* (see Wilson [1997], on the ongoing "organic" articulation of such a "local poetics"). This *heteroglossia* trope would bespeak a community of linguistic, spatial, and cultural co-existence in the Americanized Pacific. But this trope is far more promissory than actual in its fit with island history, however, as I shall try to show on a small scale of poetic analysis. If Hawaii has blasted off "from the Stone Age to the Atomic Age in two hundred years" as two noted white historians once boasted of the 50th state (see Kuykendall and Day), some "little" histories of communal belonging have been blasted away from the place, alternative symbol-systems have been suppressed if not silenced, and the damages to the locals and locale are often sublimated in a haze of tourist fantasy and Michener-like master-narratives of democratic progress from indigenous tyranny to shopping-mall luxury.

As a much-visited, all-too-erotically fetishized "Polynesian body" (see Teaiwa, 1994, for a de-reifying critique of such wide-spread "bikini" fantasies of the South Pacific) alluring nothern tourists from Minnesota to Japan with wondrous wilderness scenery as well as enchanted stagings of indigenous and ethnic sexual excess, the place is the ground for fluid neo-orientalist an ex-primitive fantasy to sprout. The United States language games of Hawaiian representation (many rooted in Hollywood fantasy still) multiply and compete to take semiotic possession of this (globally enchanted) locale, "Hawaii." These various language games are being generated (and contesed as well by now, in postcolonial contexts) both inside and outside Hawaii's ever-porous island boundaries (see essay by Rob Wilson in *Public Culture* [1995] on global versus local genres of "South Pacific" representation as well as the counter-Euro American literature and cultural criticism of Vilsoni Hereniko and Teresia Teaiwa in *Last Virgin in Paradise* [1993], for example). In the transnational calculus, Hawaii still beckons as the "blue Hawaii" of Presleyan dreams: aloha shirts, beaches, Mai Tais, and native girls conjured like a rent-a-car. As the pidgin-speaking Hawaiian comedian-poet named Bula'ia undercuts the commodity-sexy allure of Hawaii forever calling *aloha!* with lovely hula hands to the agencies of global tourism, "Thank you for visiting

Hawaii, brah, but don't forget to go back home!" (for a scathing critique on indigenous grounds, also see Trask, "Lovely Hula Hands: Corporate Tourism and the Prostitution of Hawaiian Culture," 1993).

For the two tongues of English (*ka 'olelo haole*, "the strangers' tongue" as it is called in Hawaiian) and the Native Hawaiian language *were never allowed to be equal in status and to co-exist in public spaces* in modernizing Hawaii. Enforcing American cultural sway and commercial hegemony with the coming of the New England Congregational missionaries to Oahu in 1820, the English language soon superseded the Hawaiian language which was banned as a language of public school instruction in 1898 upon annexation into organic US territory. Only as recently as 1986 was this state-imposed *injustice* reversed, with the Hawaiian language officially adopted by law as the "second language" by the state of Hawaii under its Hawaiian Governor, John Waihe'e. Since the 1980s, Hawaiian immersion programs like *Punana Leo* have been implemented to further the education of Native Hawaiians interested in growing up bi-lingual and immersing themselves in Hawaiian cultural mores (see Kimura [1989] and Balaz [1989]). At the strongest public extreme of political ferment, Hawaiian has proven to be the basis of a cultural flourishing in the literary and performing arts, has served as the means of ongoing cultural rehabilitation and pride of symbolic and mythical identity, and now undergirds the ongoing struggle for *self-determined national sovereignty* underway and gathering social mass as concrete political form, as indigenous "nation within a nation" (see Trask, *From a Native Daughter* on struggles of de-colonization and cultural nationalism; and Fujikane [1994] on the makings of a non-indigenous Asian/Pacific "Local Nation").

Given the globalizing economy and the spectacular outreach of cultural systems like those language-games generated from Hollywood and Paris to Hong Kong, however, no island is an island nation unto him/herself. As a boom-and-bust state dangerously over-dependent upon the influx of global tourism to witness spectacles of its natural wilderness bounty, indigenous uniqueness and ethnic success, Hawaii (as well as the indigenous nation of Native Hawaiians being articulated within US and international legal systems) can by no means exist inside its own "local" cultural borders as an isolated political economy.

At the global extreme, everyday lives/subjects and the stories of identity inside the creativity and chaos of the Pacific Rim are being shaped, coded, marketed and organized under an "Asia-Pacific" transnational banner, as has been discussed elsewhere (see Dirlik [1993]; Palat [1993] and Dirlik/Wilson [1995]), with unforeseen consequences good and bad. This drive for regional coherence is no longer just Euro American centered but is being mobilized

under the capitalist dynamism of *APEC*. This hegemonic framework around an Asian-driven Pacific demands trenchantly situated postmodern critical interrogation of the Pacific *local/locality* if we are to acknowledge and, in effect, adjudicate the competing language games of symbolic representation, local/indigenous emergences, and 'cultural identity discourse' that evolve within state apparatuses across the region (see Chun, essay forthcoming in *Theory, Culture and Society* on entangled dimensions of ethnic/nation/state configurations in "Greater China"; and Liao on the dangers of "cultural fundamentalism" haunting codes for the Asia-Pacific region again).

II. Shark God on Trial in the Political Ecology of *Jaws* and *Moby-Dick*

"Basically, minorities are not social ensembles, they are territories of language. Every one of us belongs to several minorities, and what is very important, none of them prevails. It is only then that we can say that our [postmodern] society is just. Can there be justice without the domination of one [language] game upon the others?"

—Jean-Francois Lyotard and Jean-Loup Thebaud, "Majority Does Not Mean Great Number But Great Fear," *Just Gaming* (95).

I want to examine, in a more detailed way, (a) these *heterological poetics and politics of place* available in contemporary Hawaii as well as (b) to expose the symbolic and/or (ill)legal speech acts of symbolic landscape possession—as generated through and around a *little* Native Hawaiian poem from the rich oral traditions ("orature") of hula in pre-missionary times in fast-modernizing Hawaii. To show the potentially disruptive resonance of "local mythology" within the global economy of the postmodern/postcolonial world (with its literary stress upon enacting the *situated strategies and language-games of the local*), I want to re-enact the local poetics and politics of place, as these can be generated around and out of a nineteenth-century Hawaiian poem in which a shark god takes possession of a Hawaiian harbor in the name of the Big Island king the poem/chant/hula exists as "sacred" language to honor and politically and symbolically endorse. This so-called pagan/barbaric song of sharks never really existed in oblivion, but it was placed out of circulation by the American religious and commercial hegemony and bespeaks the suppression of another history, an ethos, as well as an intimate and genuinely *different* knowledge/mythology of the Pacific ocean and the local community tending the island shores (see Dirlik, 1991, for a "heterological" analysis of contemporary literature as *nomadic counter-*

history to the settler's discourse of the nation-state).

If such nomadic/state-legitimated language-games remain *incommensurable* (see Lyotard and Thebaud, 1985, on the postmodern sensibility to the *differend*), like a joke and a death sentence, or a lyric poem and a legal will, the end result of this comparative analysis will aim to contest and challenge (or at the very least, *to dialogize*) the naturalized way such a symbolic act of language-possession (for Hawaiians, can we not say that this oral chant comprised a communal contract?) can be suppressed and disavowed by the United States legal and military courts (the system of "militourism" to use the impious description of the postmodern cultural critic, Teresia Teaiwa [1994]). If we examine the expressive range of the Pacific as cultural locality within "APEC," these different cultural literatures can help provide *different mappings of the Asia-Pacific region*, and, as such, can help to circulate alternative mappings and subjugated knowledge of modernity and the spaces/times and future directions (capitalist telos) of postmodern history inside the Pacific.

This *name-chant poem* I want to zero in on with gleeful postmodern attention is called, in English translation, "Shark Hula for Ka-lani-opu'u." This hula poem vividly praises the king of the outer Hawaii island as well as his high-blooded genealogy as linked to the *'aumakua* (In addition to the native mythologies of shark and ocean archived in the cultural narratives of David Malo, John Papa Ii, and Samuel Kamakau, see Borg [1993] for contemporary Hawaiians who still hold to such beliefs and opposed on such grounds the shark-hunting expeditions implemented by the Hawaii Shark Task Force after a resident was killed by a tiger shark in the waters off Maui in 1991). These Hawaiian guardian-spirit shark gods have, so the poem claims in vivid and memorable oral language, given Ka-lani-opu'u not only his royal name (*O kou inoa i* runs the generic formula of the refrain), heavenly influx and mandate of sacred mana (power), but also his claim to the very land and harbor he rules over as Big Island chief: "Ka-lani-opu'u, the right to impose the kapu [sacred laws/taboo] on the land is yours" [by] "the right of a shark with arched dorsal fin to bare teeth" as the opening lines so starkly put it. Later in the poem, the king is described as not so much descended from the water-ruling sharks, he has become one, as the community "we" voice urges upon its subject:

Now answer us, Ka-lani-opu'u, fierce Island-Piercer!

This is your name chant:

You are a white-finned shark riding the crest of the wave,

O Ka-lani-opu'u:

a tiger-shark resting without fear.

After invoking various images of natural power and heavenly energy to ratify the sacred mana and incarnate the manly prowess of this Big Island king, the "shark hula" poem ends with this *quasi-legal claim* for Ka-lani-'opu'u to possess and legitimately rule over the island of Hawaii as such a claims comes down from the kapu chiefess, Ke-aka-mahana, his powerful Great-grandmother who had royal blood claims to the island polities of Hawaii and Kau'ai and was descended from the much-honored king, Lono-i-kamakahiki, whom Samuel M. Kamakau made so much of as legitimate genealogical origin in his tragi-comic history of the Hawaiian nation up to the time of Ka-mehameha

III in 1854, *Ruling Chiefs of Hawaii*:

Your sovereign sway surveys this island and beyond
 over the multitudinous children of [Great-grandmother] Ke-aka-
 mahana,
 by whose name you do inherit and wear by right
 the shining feather cloak.

To enforce such images drawn from nature as well as to shape communal history into a compelling image of legitimacy commanding place-bound belief, the "Shark Hula for Ka-lani-opu'u" most likely had been traditionally performed as a "sitting hula" with totemic movements and symbolic gestures that enforced its layered symbology into the body and resonated into the community of (pagan) believers. Calling such a *sacred* hula song one of those myriad Hawaiian "animal dances," Nathaniel B. Emerson also claimed in the valuable musical ethnography he compiled for the Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin in 1909 as *Unwritten Literature: The Sacred Songs of the Hula* (reprinted 1965) that "the last and only mention of [the Shark Hula's] performance was in 1847," when King Ka-mehameha III made a tour of Oahu and was feted with chants and hulas by his Hawaiian subjects in the island kingdom (221).

The time and space markings of the shark chant was fast dying out in the Christian and capitalist scheme of things that was taking over the island history of the real, especially after the Great Mahele of 1848 forever divided up the island and linked ocean spaces of symbolic tenancy into the capitalist geometry of real estate and English-language contracts as tenure deeds took total possession of the islands (on this far-reaching alienation and redistribution of the land into contract law system as well as native resistance

and acceptance, ironically giving rise to such land-rich trusts of Hawaiian capitalism cum Christian instruction like the Bishop Estate, see Lilikala Kame'eleihiwa, *Native Lands and Foreign Desires* [1992]). The shark god poem was not just 'bad' poetry, it evoked threatening symbols of another way of life, another way of taking possession of the landscape, the language, and the sea.

By no means a flaming postmodernist, Mary Kawena Pukui, that treasure trove of primal Hawaiian language knowledge, vernacular proverbs, and royal wisdom, working along with Alfons L. Korn, a Victorianist member of the English Department at the University of Hawaii who took his residence seriously in Hawaii as a scholarly mandate to listen to the cultural others in the Pacific as well, have made the shark poem/chant/sacred song available for lasting interpretation and cultural circulation at the local and global levels of postmodernity. The "afterlife" of the shark god demands a new, postmodern hearing in contexts where the master-narratives no longer have complete credibility and social sway. Translation transmigrates the codes, converting little into big and contesting the big and sublime into the pompous and irrelevant (*Moby-Dick* is not the only mapping of the "American Pacific"). If the language game is little, its import social and cosmic.

From the transcendental hermeneutics of whiteness in Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick* to the ecological melodrama of terrorized New Englanders in Peter Benchley's *Jaws*, the creatures of the briny deep have long served as a focus of unconscious projection and ideological need to express some of the deepest capitalist longings and spiritual phobias of the American national-popular imagination. Whales and sharks have not just been plundered for oil, sperm, skin, bones and food, they have been *demonized and transcendentalized* into sublime objects of dread and wonder: wondrous beings part commodity and part godhead, at once alienated and dangerous, endangered by Ahab and his state police and naval apparatus force but laden in some almost compulsive way with the deepest mythologies of American sublimity challenging the national will to dominate the frontier wilderness and turn the God-given natural resources of the material earth (following the Emersonian Protestant capitalist poetic) from symbol to commodity (see Wilson, *American Sublime* [1991] on this poetics of national domination). Sharks and whales are not so much ancestors and oceanic co-residents as they are for the aboriginal Hawaiians some of whom tamed and road sharks and claimed them as family protectors (see Leighton Taylor [1993]). For New Englanders, as representative capitalist Americans on their whaling-ship factories, they are demons of wilderness antagonism and lethal devils of white racial animosity that need to be sacralized (via symbolic textualization) into

Leviathan or, in the worst case scenario, liquidated from anxious corners of the earth, whether a resort harbor full of vacationing tourists in Rhode Island (as in *Jaws*) or the unplundered splendors of the vast Pacific from Honolulu to Canton (as in Ahab's whaling-ship factory quest in *Moby-Dick*). A notice in the *USA Today* "Best-Selling Books" list from the summer of 1995 says it all: *White Shark*, by Peter Benchley: "Something more dangerous than a white shark is in the water," meaning the geopolitical phobias of a declining nation-state ever ready to take the threat out of the post-war Pacific Ocean. The killer sublime still sells.

To be sure, this little Hawaiian "shark hula" chant is written in that dreaded *hula mano* genre. Its *wild chanting* occurs in a throaty, wailing poetic language bellowed out in praise of the shark gods and their kindred king. It is thus voiced in a subaltern language filled with those "hideous noises at night" that the Calvinists hated as signs of nerve-wracking paganism and soon had outlawed from cultural production in the islands by a converted Hawaiian queen, Ka'ahu-manu. It may still strike the rational ears of moral capital as pagan and wrong, as a symbology of royal violence forever outside the proper codes of poetry and the law of the Greco-Roman father.

Speaking as a diasporic New Englander in the Pacific, to the contrary, this shark poem has long fascinated and haunted me, as a state-salaried "Professor of American Literature" in the New Pacific, since I first read it in the dual-language anthology (Hawaiian/English) translated by Mary K. Pukui and Alfons L. Korn, *The Echo of Our Song: Chants & Poems of the Hawaiians* and had begun teaching it in my poetry classes at the University of Hawaii in the 1980s as an early example of the "local poem." I called this shark poem an uncanny example of "local literature," because like the works of Asian/Pacific "local literature" that were emerging since 1978 around Bamboo Ridge Press and in collections like *Ho'omanoa: An Anthology of Contemporary Hawaiian Literature* (1989) edited by Joseph Puna Balaz, it gave voice to the symbolic narratives, myths, hidden languages and cultural mores of the "local" island and, as distinctive language, took possession of the Hawaiian locality in a blunt way that was frightening in its sublime power, poetic layerings, cultural authenticity, and directness of claim.

This chant of some 25 lines was written for the high chief of the island of Hawaii, Ka-lani'opu'u (d. 1782), the powerful uncle of King Kamehameha I, who first unified the disparate islands of Hawaii into the centripetal makings of a modern and internationally recognized nation-kingdom after fateful contacts with the European nation-state and juridical models of the British sea captains, James Cook and George Vancouver. Called the "Tereoboo," Ka-lani'opu'u it was who, dressed in feather capes

and helmets and surrounded by priests and offerings, welcomed Captain Cook to the Big Island in 1779, during the navigator's second visit to the so-called sandwich islands, the one which resulted in Cook's apotheostic death.

III. Postmodern Justice in the Pacific: Towards Plural Language-Games

Postmodern justice demands, as I am urging here, a different way of hearing comparative literature: the *little stories* of the shark god et al can at least be heard, preserved, circulated, appreciated for the alternative knowledge of the sea, earth, and ecosphere they can present in these days of late capitalism when the earth and ocean seem on the verge of irrevocable ecological degradation. There is another knowledge of the Pacific and its complex local communities out there, and citizens of APEC and the New Pacific would do well to listen to these heteroglossic counter-narratives and counter-visions of what constitutes a proper and decent knowledge of the earth and sea. For myself, as cultural critic in the Asia/Pacific region, postmodern justice demands that these language games of the local and the little, the mythic and the communal, be listened in some "heterological" way that does not presume to judge and adjudicate their wisdom in some all-mastering Hegelian kind of way. That language game of philosophy and truth, that dialectic of absolute enlightenment and will to mastery over non-European others is intolerant, moribund, and terroristic. Such arrogant language games have, in many respects, gotten us into the endgame the late capitalist earth is in.

The legal odds are stacked against such a "shark chant" as repository of native beliefs being heard in the US system: in "Pele in a Christian Court," Joseph Chang (in a canny *Hawai'i Review* essay [1993] aligning a non-Hawaiian local with the preservation and usage of non-Hawaiian ecological beliefs) shows that Native Hawaiian claims to disrupt the True/Geothermal Project in the Puna Rainforest of the Big Island are doomed to discursive defeat in an American court where nature is presupposed to be a desacralized commodity and for whom the "Pele worship" of Hawaiians can only be validated, not by the communal force of native animism, but by truth claims of Western material archaeology and cultural anthropology proving (or, as is the recurring case, *disproving*) some unbroken continuity since the coming of Captain Cook for such an aboriginal practice to be declared legitimate.

Perhaps, at last in the dialogical genres of cultural criticism and the global/local circuits of international comparative literature, Chief Ka-lani-

opu`u and his courtly poets of the Hawaiian name-chant can get another hearing of the little story by the big (see Lyotard, *Postmodern Condition* [1984]). Subjugated knowledges may be given a different hearing in the dialogical courts of postmodern justice, so to speak. For, if ours is an age that has grown "incredulous" of the domineering master-narratives of dialectical progress via the will to negation, as well as the drive to speculative totality claiming view-from-nowhere universality, as Jean-Francois sweepingly claims in *The Postmodern Condition*, this lyrical French pragmatist of competing language-games and un-listened-to pagan "driftings" beyond the philosophical rationales of the state has at least provided a space—or opening—where, against all the instrumentalized odds of the marketplace, the "little stories" of alternative mythology, unorthodoxy, indigenous knowing, and subaltern mappings of space-time can at least be given the *justice* of an open and renewed postmodern hearing.

I have tried to counter the reigning *master-narrative* of capitalist teleology and nature as real estate in the APEC-coded Pacific with another story: a *local story*, a little story with its own abiding claims to make upon Pacific identity and these Hawaiian harbors. If such language games remain, as Lyotard says they do in the competing postmodern pragmatics of *Just Gaming*, "incommensurable," that also provides the grounds of the continuing injustice of "Just Gaming." Such claims to take symbolic possession of place and to claim space for "local culture" occur in different language games whereby the legal ones of the U.S. contract and property system can displace, ignore and silence the lesser (alternative, subaltern) games of symbolic possession. If the indigenous volcano goddess of Pele goes on trial in the court system of the Big Island, she will always already lose to the powers and ruses of the state's geothermal lawyers, as the US court cannot finally recognize another language and alternative language game—however animistic, however compelling such a "shark chant" or "Pele myth" is to the Hawaiian community of believer, however continuous its genealogy down from the past and out from the cultrual unconscious of its symbolic adherents who believe in and would still recognize the reality of its "real estate" claims. The stories do not match, and the gods of Adam Smith and the so-called free market have blown out the shark gods of King Kamehameha's terrible uncle.

By focusing upon such issues of "little stories" confronting "big" ones and conjuring global/local dialectics, sub-national and nomadic cultural-identity tensions, I would thus invoke that *localist* basis to urge a *postmodern counter-narrative* to the master teleology of the Asian-Pacific future. The US court is not the *only* framework in which peoples and subjects of history can take possession of place and tell stories of the past and help their people

in the symbolic begetting: pushing out towards the justice of another future. The shark god on trial in the US system and hunted down by the Hawaii State Task Force to mollify tourists always loses, as does the volcano goddess named Pele on the Big Island, because the belief system and modes of legitimated knowing are stacked against hearing another belief system, dealing with a different pragmatics, and understanding an alternative language game, like the sacred poetry and wisdom of the "shark hula."¹ *Postmodern justice* at least demands that we try to hear something else in our hyper-textual language makings that the drone of contract law and the language-games of transnational capital adjudicating, in the consecrated story of "corporate real estate" taking dominion over, what a local Pacific community takes to be the real, the beautiful, and the good.

Notes

¹I do not want to sound too *fatalistically* cynical here about the capitalistic legal systems of the white settler-states in the decolonizing Pacific: in Australia, for example, the "Mabo" High Court decision of June, 1992, has powerful implications for the adjudication of Aboriginal land claims and the potential redistribution of national/indigenous geography. See the special issue of *Race and Class* edited by Peter Poynton (April-June, 1994).

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