

Jennifer Goodlander. “From Ambon to Paradise: Dreaming the Archipelago in *The Kitchen* by Luna Vidya and “Gunung Salahutu/‘O Honolulu Ku‘u Home” by Vanessa Alputila”

The island of Ambon, part of the Maluku islands in Indonesia, is the imagined home in both *The Kitchen* by Luna Vidya and “Gunung Salahutu/‘O Honolulu Ku‘u Home” by Vanessa Alputila. In both, a character has migrated from one place to another, yet struggles to picture their new destination as “home.” In the short play, *The Kitchen*, Ruth is the *pembantu* (“servant”) who migrated to Makassar, but hopes to someday move to Java. She serves as an intermediary between mother and daughter, which mirrors her own unstable position and longing to “see Java through the window of a train.” Relationships between characters and homelands is further complicated because the play was written to be performed by a single actor, the play’s author, well-known performance artist, Luna Vidya. Ruth uses a different dialect of Indonesian, further emphasizing her identity as “outside.”

Vanessa Alputila is the only female member of the group Haopinaka, which strives to bring “the spirit of Aloha” to San Francisco through Hawaiian-inspired music and dance. “Gunung Salahutu/‘O Honolulu Ku‘u Home” is a song about her migration from Indonesia to Hawai‘i, which employs rich imagery of sea and mountain in both Indonesian and Hawaiian languages. Alputila declares that “this is the end of my story” but taken together with the first part of the song and the imagery of the video, story/place remain transitory and unsettled.

Taken together, these works complicate notions of migration and female identity. In this paper I engage with theories of the archipelago as an unstable and ever-changing place in order to think through relations between outer and inner islands, and islands and mainlands in configuring Indonesian culture and diaspora.