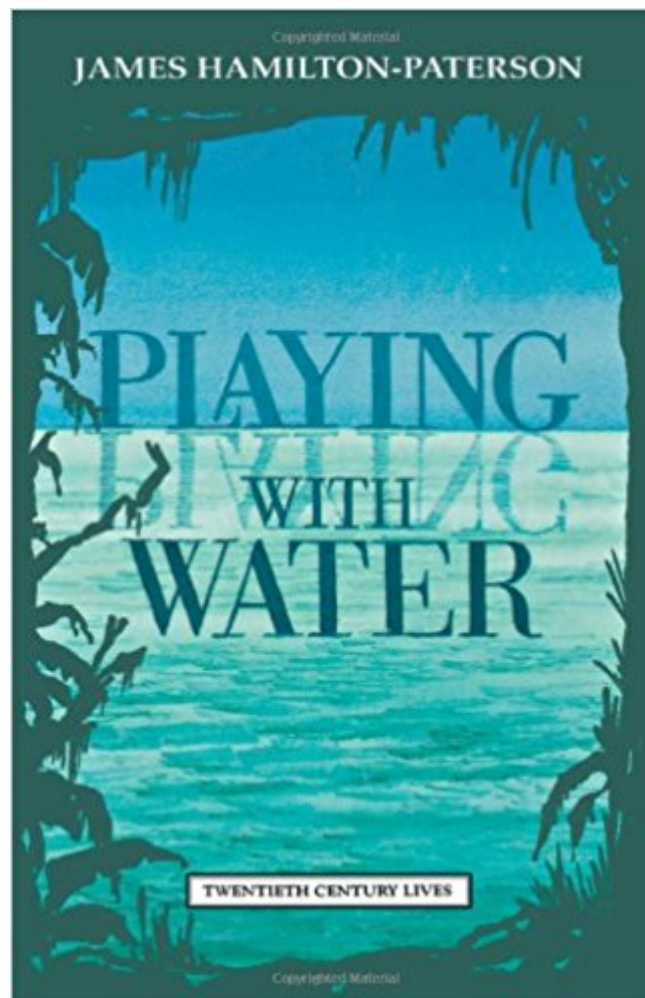




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# Playing With Water: Passion And Solitude On A Philippine Island (Twentieth Century Lives)



## Synopsis

James Hamilton-Paterson spends a third of each year on an otherwise uninhabited Philippine island, spear-fishing for survival. *Playing with Water* tells us why he does. Beyond that, it gives an account of life in that class-bound country as a whole. For it is in places like this rather than Manila of the international news reports that the underlying political and cultural reality of the Philippines may be seen.

## Book Information

Series: Twentieth Century Lives

Paperback: 288 pages

Publisher: New Amsterdam Books; Reprint edition (April 21, 1998)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0941533824

ISBN-13: 978-0941533829

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.9 x 8.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 14.1 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars 4 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #1,114,677 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #63 in [Books > Travel > Asia > Philippines](#) #167 in [Books > History > Asia > Philippines](#) #1003 in [Books > Travel > Asia > General](#)

## Customer Reviews

...a work of such genuine commitment, balanced perception and responsive passion that it will certainly be condemned to become a classic. (The New York Times) A classic travel book...entirely original: at once astringently and gorgeously written... (Andrew Harvey) Unforgettable. The Philippine landscape and these remote islanders are crystalline and at the same time mysterious; the writing itself superb. (Ronald Blythe)

James Hamilton-Paterson is generally known as a commentator on the Philippines, where he has lived on and off since 1979. He is one of the most reclusive of British literary exiles, sharing his time between Austria, where he moved recently from Italy, and the Philippines. His work defies accurate definition, containing elements of travel writing, autobiography, fiction and science.

Hamilton-Paterson was born on November 6, 1941 in London, England. He was educated at Windlesham House, Sussex, Bickley Hall, Kent, King's School, Canterbury, and Exeter College,

Oxford. Some of his other books include *A very personal war: the story of Cornelius Hawkridge* (1971), *The View from Mount Dog* (1987), and *Gerontius* (1989).

James Hamilton-Paterson is a very intelligent author and forces me to break out my dictionary every now and then, yet this book is about a very simple adventure. It is an experience we only dream of doing since it is impractical for most. Since we cannot take on an adventure like this on our own, we can at least read about the experience here. It is an account of living alone on an uninhabited island in the Philippines. There is contact with the locals on the mainland, which makes the book all the more enjoyable, because of the unique personality of the Philippine people. You will feel as if you are there as this is no imaginary experience, but very real one, right down to every beautiful detail.

i read this book so many years ago, but i can still remember how good it is. this book is not only about the underwater world but also about the goings-on in a typical barrio in the philippines. it has a socio-economic aspect to it that i found quite realistic, having been born and raised in that very same third world country. it amazed and pleased me that a foreigner like hamilton-paterson could, quite accurately, capture the very essence of filipino rural society---like the old woman who he suspects isn't so aloof and taciturn as she seems and the children of the barrio who frolic in the water and in their humble amusements, oblivious of the shortcomings of a third world upbringing. the book is an unusual stew of underwater adventure and an unpatronizing account of a life among barrio folk.

Paterson is living on a small island in the Philippines and he is joining the natives in diving (i.e. fishing) for a living. We scuba-divers, as we only come for 1-2 week vacations, often are not experiencing the reality around our dive sites. Paterson's book was helping me understand more of the countries I was visiting. Very instructive are his personal insights about ecology in a third world country and the connections to the economical and social structure. I found it very valuable that the insights do not follow the well known beaten paths about the third world but are rather well founded, personal observations. This makes this book a much more interesting read than any other book about the subject that I have ever read before.

This is a great book about about personal introspection and, I would say, coming to terms with being a solitary person. I loved this book and his real attempt to understand the culture and motivations of the people in rural Philippines. It is a great read.

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