

Book and Media Reviews

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community affairs at Bishop Museum. The event was attended by Bishop Museum members, representatives of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs and of Te Papa, and a handful of others including Adrienne Kaeppler, one of the coeditors of the book *Royal Hawaiian Featherwork: Nā Hulu Ali'i* (2015). Over cups of kava, the attendees discussed their joy at having Kalani'ōpu'u's treasures back in Hawai'i and what their return at this specific time meant for Bishop Museum and the Hawaiian people. Deep emotions, ranging from anger over the treasures' long absence and joy at their return, were expressed and heard.

Whenever an exhibit like this opens, questions of repatriation are never far from one's mind, particularly as this is a growing topic between museums and indigenous communities. For many indigenous community members, museums represent places where stolen treasures are displayed in sterile splendor. In this situation some may feel the same, but the circumstances are different from many that demand repatriation. The key difference here is that, unlike many other objects, the 'ahu'ula and mahiole were not stolen from the Hawaiian Islands. They were freely given by their owner Kalani'ōpu'u to travel the world with James Cook, and they would travel much farther than he after his death.

Although the 'ahu'ula and mahiole may appear to some as simply objects or things, with an arguably significant provenance, others view them as Kalani'ōpu'u himself. One explanation for this comes from the mana of Kalani'ōpu'u that was absorbed by the 'ahu'ula and mahiole as he wore

them while he was alive. The majority of people who hold this view are from Native Hawaiian and other Oceanic communities. For those of us who find ourselves approaching this exhibit from a non-Hawaiian perspective, we must decide if we can see these pieces in the same way. If so, how should they be viewed and treated? Ultimately, whether this exhibit is viewed as items of clothing owned by Kalani'ōpu'u or the man himself returned, their importance for the Hawaiian Islands and Native Hawaiian people is undeniable.

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Talanoa: Building a Pasifika Research Culture, edited by Peggy Fairbairn-Dunlop and Eve Coxon. Auckland: Dunmore Publishing, 2014. ISBN 978-1-927212-14-1; 224 pages. Paper, NZ\$39.99.

Talanoa: Building a Pasifika Research Culture showcases twelve chapters from both established and emerging researchers of Pacific Islander descent. Its title, according to editors Peggy Fairbairn-Dunlop and Eve Coxon, refers to an online network that links New Zealand and Pacific Island universities and serves as a channel for sharing research ideas and findings among Pasifika students and researchers (also known as the Pacific Post Graduate Talanoa series). Chapters in this volume come from works shared during the first five years of the Talanoa series (2007–2012).

The first chapter, written by Fairbairn-Dunlop, provides a brief

overview of the Talanoa series during this first five-year period: its origin, organization, and delivery, and its expansion to include staff on university campuses in the Pacific Islands. Fairbairn-Dunlop locates the strength of the program in its ability to facilitate the growth of the Pacific social science research community.

Karlo Mila, in chapter 2, tackles the stereotypes and dominant narratives about Pasifika peoples as she focuses her research on high-achieving Pasifika. She aligns her work with a “positive deviance” mode of inquiry, combined with a strengths-based approach and a participative mixed-methods process. In so doing, she brings to the fore alternative positions and narratives that have been otherwise ignored.

In chapter 3, Jared Mackley-Crump examines the festivalization of Pacific cultures in New Zealand, and he locates his study in the emerging area of festival studies. In this ethnographic and participant-driven research, he notes that little attention has been paid to Pacific festival space in New Zealand. He engages the themes of festival and community and roots his work in indigenous frames based on ‘Eveli Hau‘ofa’s “sea of islands” and Tēvita Ka‘ili’s “tauhi vā.”

Chapter 4, by Charlotte Bedford, assesses the Recognised Seasonal Employer policy and asks the question: Is it delivering “wins” to employers, workers, and Island communities? She uses both quantitative and qualitative data to measure the success of the project.

Chapter 5 shifts the focus to the availability of information on Pasifika fathers and their influence on their

children. El-Shadan Tautolo acknowledges that due to a lack of information, services are not targeted at Pasifika fathers in New Zealand. He argues that there is a need for more information because it would lead to fathers being better informed and supported to fulfill their roles.

Tui Nicola Clery, in chapter 6, offers the only essay that explicitly mentions talanoa. Her work sets out to develop methods for peace research in Fiji, and that involves weaving together indigenous and nonindigenous ideas. Her aim is to create peace research that is ethical, culturally reflective, respectful, and profoundly communicative. She articulates for that purpose key Pasifika concepts like *teu le vā* (to maintain or cherish relations); *talanoa* (talk, conversation; to tell stories); and *tiko* (participatory learning). She then combines ideas from these concepts with arts-based approaches to establish complementary research tools for use in multicultural communities.

In chapter 7, Patrick Vakaoti, another Fijian contributor, has as his research focus the young men who frequent the streets of Suva. To Vakaoti, street space is one of the “developmental crossroads” that creates both opportunities and tensions. The “street-frequenting young men” are those for whom the streets have become “home”—a site of survival, identity formation, and resistance. Vakaoti argues that these young men are normal citizens who deserve something better in the society in which they live.

In chapter 8, Litea Meo-Sewabu, also from Fiji, explores cultural conceptualizations of health and well-

being; she maintains that the praxis of ethnography offers some valuable lessons. She discusses the development of a research framework centered on the concept of “cultural discernment” in relation to Fijian knowledge. Through the process of cultural discernment, “a group of people collaborate to ensure that the research process is ethical within the cultural context of the research setting” (145).

Telesia Kalavite, follows in chapter 9 with an exploration of Pacific-Tongan research approaches. She stresses the importance of Pasifika methodologies for research on Pasifika peoples as in her research on the journey of Tongan students to academic achievement in New Zealand tertiary education. Kalavite asserts that one must employ a research methodology that makes sense of Tongan students’ “worlds” and the social interactions that contribute to their academic performance.

Chapter 10 elevates attention to another level, where Nina Tonga focuses on the intersection of digital art and the notion of home. Tonga states that since the inception of the Internet, Pacific people have been navigating and creating their own spaces within the expansive territory of cyberspace. In so doing, the notion of home is redefined and reconstructed. Online networks, to Tongans, have bridged the physical divides among globally dispersed Pacific communities, thus leading diasporic people to re-territorialize the notion of “homeland” to include virtual spaces. This broadens what it means to be Pasifika in the digital age.

Tanya Wendt Samu, in chapter 11, shares a collective approach to becoming Pasifika women in academia.

Reflecting on the Kainga Pasifika group at the Faculty of Education of the University of Auckland, Samu defines the group as a “community of practice” with four components: a strong, supportive community; construction and maintenance of a unique shared identity; negotiated meaning (through participation); and formation of specific social, cultural practices. This offers distinctive workplace philosophies, actions, and approaches that create a safe space for Pasifika women in academia.

The volume closes with a chapter from Ruth Toumu‘a, whose work seeks to build an understanding of academic reading for first-year Pasifika students in a New Zealand university context. Toumu‘a employs a multi-method approach, though predominantly qualitative, with insights drawn from quantitative measurements of reader, text, and task attributes. She also uses *fala* (mat) as a central metaphor and thus imagines the various strands of the research woven together to reveal insights about academic reading.

The volume overall is a magnificent display of Pasifika ideas and perspectives. But despite generally strong and useful contributions in each chapter, this is not a perfect collection. For instance, the book’s title might suggest to some potential readers that “talanoa” is the focus of the volume. Talanoa is more than just talking to each other through an online network of that name; an enhanced engagement with talanoa as a contemporary Pasifika method in more than one chapter would have been welcome. It could also have conversed with other works on talanoa by Pasifika authors,

such as *Talanoa Ripples* (Jione Havea, 2010) and *Talanoa Rhythms*, which I edited (2011). Both volumes published selected papers from Talanoa Oceania conferences in 2008–2009 and dealt more centrally with the concept but are never mentioned. Acknowledging existing works on the core topic by other Pasifika authors, irrespective of fields and disciplines, would be a good step forward in building a research culture.

The subtitle, “Building a Pasifika Research Culture,” is also misleading because it gives a false impression that there was no existing culture of inquiry prior to BRCS (Building Research Capability in the Social Science network) and this volume. Likewise, many of the methodologies employed by the researchers are not Pasifika, but rather seem to encourage Pasifika researchers to continue to use non-Pasifika methodologies for studying Pasifika people. A few works discuss Pasifika concepts, but while they are drawn on, they could have been integrated in a more systematic way. Pasifika deserves more than the preservation and promotion of Euro-centric approaches and methodologies.

However, despite my skepticism, this volume opens up new avenues and alternatives for ongoing talanoa about issues that matter to Pasifika researchers and communities. I commend the editors and contributors for giving voice and space to Pasifika perspectives. The work deserves a wider audience and should inform policy design and practices in educational, political, and social settings.

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Aloha America: Hula Circuits through the U.S. Empire, by Adria L Imada. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012. ISBN cloth, 978-0-8223-5196-2; paper, 978-0-8223-5207-5; ix + 270 pages, abbreviations, notes, glossary, bibliography, index. Cloth, US\$89.95; paper, US\$24.95.

Aloha America: Hula Circuits through the U.S. Empire is an interdisciplinary work that explores how hula performances aided in the securing of Hawai‘i as part of the US empire. Adria Imada examines the various ways that female hula dancers embodied the relationship of hospitality between Hawaiians and the United States from the time of Hawai‘i’s illegal overthrow in 1893 to its becoming the fiftieth state in 1959. Tracing an arc between the Hawaiian monarchy’s deliberate resurgence of hula practices in the face of American cultural and political imperialism, the first hula circuits that came to the US continent and Europe in the late nineteenth century, and contemporary hula circuits, she specifically shows that Hawaiian performers engaged in counter-colonial, rather than anticolonial, acts that have both strengthened and weakened US hegemony in the Islands. This history of performance, argues Imada, obfuscates the American occupation of Hawai‘i. Imada is an associate professor of history at the University of California, Irvine. Being from Hawai‘i and a practitioner of hula, she brings experience and knowledge to this important work.

In chapter 1, “Lady Jane at the Boathouse: The Intercultural World of Hula,” Imada discusses the resurgence of hula as a cultural and political