Book and Media Reviews
Another highlight of the book are the additions of the three poems (as mentioned above). The ethnographic poetry by Emelihter Kihleng entitled “urohs language” is particularly a refreshing addition to the volume. Kihleng weaves personal and ethnographic approaches into her poetic and raw descriptions of urohs (Pohnpeian skirts): “urohs speak to her / late at night as / she sews on her Janome / the quiet doesn’t faze her / she listens / her world is visual, physical / textile spiritual” (257–258). Her poem reveals an intimate relationship with urohs and languages, tracing the social life of the skirts and their makers.

Overall this volume presents many new approaches to understanding women’s wealth and value in the Pacific. The volume could have benefited from more diverse topics and regional perspectives from elsewhere in the region, as well as a more balanced focus on urban/rural issues. There seemed to be a heavy focus on Collingwood Bay and Trobriand Islands, Papua New Guinea. Considering one of the main goals of the volume was to critically intervene in anthropological theories of earlier anthropological work (mostly in Papua New Guinea), I can understand why the editors decided not to cover a larger breadth of work and regional perspectives. While this volume contributes to a broader understanding of value and gender studies, there is limited mention of nonbinary gender inclusions in these analyses. In the epilogue, Jolly discusses contemporary studies of gender including “gender fluidity, transcending the heteronormative binary of male and female, embracing the inclusion of transgender and intersex people, and the complex relations between gender identity and sexual orientation” (266). This volume could have pushed these ideas further by including a greater variety of voices, perhaps through additional creative pieces and research done outside an anthropological framework.

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Oceanian Journeys and Sojourns: Home Thoughts Abroad is a collection of essays edited by Judith A Bennett. Compiled in honor of Murray Chapman, these essays celebrate his students, friends, and colleagues who have gone on to enrich mobility studies of Pacific Islanders far beyond the purely economic and geographic analyses that once dominated the field. The book is divided into three parts, the first of which is focused on Chapman, his career, and his seminal contributions to Pacific studies and understandings of Pacific mobility. Part 2 focuses on Indigenous perspectives and experiences of movement in Sāmoa, Fiji, the Federated States of Micronesia, and Solomon Islands. Part 3 is less concerned with Islander
mobility and is more focused on research in Oceania. In essence, the collection is a weaving of a theoretical genealogy concerning Oceanian movement. This is a genealogy that Chapman has profoundly contributed to and one that continues to grow while further incorporating and engaging Indigenous experiences and Indigenous methodologies.

In part 1, Bennett’s introduction reviews Chapman’s contributions to the study of Pacific mobility and thoroughly summarizes each of the featured essays. She explains how each of the collection’s contributors is connected to Chapman and the ways in which each piece reflects his approaches to Pacific mobility. Bennett traces the evolution of Chapman’s scholarship by acknowledging the academics that inspired and collaborated with him and by outlining his career from his master’s research in the Solomons through the University of Auckland to his professorship at the University of Hawai‘i. In the second chapter, David Gegeo, a former student of Chapman and now professor at the Solomon Islands National University, interviews Chapman, who describes his career and how he came to understand migration as culturally rooted, holistic, and circular. Chapman claims his skepticism for traditional demographic analysis of Pacific mobility, which focused solely on the economics of movement, began early in his research. After living in Tasimauri and listening to Pacific Islander perspectives on movement, he came to understand culture as a central element in mobility (49). This approach to migration studies is further expounded on in the essays that follow, each authored by either a former student or a close friend of Chapman.

Part 2 of the text begins with “Journeyings” by Sa‘iilemanu Lilomaiaava-Doktor, who explores how fa’a-Sāmoa (Samoan way of life or culture) informs Samoan understandings of movement. Lilomaiaava-Doktor explains that through malanga—“the Samoan word for migration or . . . to travel back and forth or journeyings”—Samoans navigate both physical and social space (69). For example, mobility in the form of attending social gatherings is an expression of respect and a means of affirming belonging within an ‘aiga (family) (78). She also argues that “social connections rather than geographic boundaries are central to Samoan conceptions of movement” (82). Therefore, movement across great distances that is done in culturally appropriate ways and that serves to enrich the ‘aiga can strengthen rather than strain familial ties.

“Emic Understandings of Mobility,” by Lola Quan Bautista, illuminates the ways in which culture and familial obligation affect the mobility of the people of Satowan Atoll, in the Federated States of Micronesia. Bautista, like Lilomaiaava-Doktor, is deeply concerned with proper and improper forms of mobility, but Bautista more closely analyzes the role of gender in determining whether or not a person is negotiating their space appropriately (97). Asenati Liki’s “Women as Kin” refutes the notion of teine uli (Samoan women whose ancestors were Melanesian plantation workers) as “mere labourer descendants with no cultural
identity” as well as the notion that work is solely a means for personal economic gain (157). Liki does this by delineating the ways in which teine uli have nurtured their Samoan familial connections across multiple generations and through their work and generosity. Liki shifts the focus of migration research away from young men and instead toward whole families, drawing attention to the role and experiences of Pacific women, which she notes have been underrepresented (159).

In “Send Me Back to Lakeba,” Raymond Young emphasizes the significance of the physical body in migration. He does so by examining the personal experiences of migrants from the Fiji island of Lakeba to Suva, in the context of the Lakeban premise that a person “carr[ies] relationships with them” (170). Therefore, understanding Fijian migration as moving through “pathways” better connotes the ways in which a person’s movement occurs within familial relationships as well as across physical space (189).

In “Tuhu Vera,” Tarcisius Tara Kabutaulaka explores the meaning of “veraqu (home)” and “tuhu vera (changing places of residence)” and the ways in which these intersect and inform his identity (197). He does so by describing and analyzing his personal experience as a Tasimauri man who has spent over twenty years away from home (196). He explains how his travels and time abroad have not diminished his connection to Tasimauri. He is deeply and genealogically connected to his village, Haimatua, since he is part of the manukiki clan; thus, his veraqu is inextricably bounded to his person and unaffected by his residencies elsewhere (196). Rather than replacing his ancestral identity, Kabutaulaka’s scholarship, travels, and new relationships have added layers of complexity and connectivity to his identity. Not only is Kabutaulaka’s story inspiring but it also humanizes mobility and identity studies in a way that is often lost in objective and depersonalized academic writing. “The Duress of Movement,” by Jully Makini, is also a personal account. Makini describes her experiences of the June 2000 Guadalcanal Coup from her home in Gizo, Solomon Islands. She details the fears of daily life, the ethnic tensions that perpetuated the violence, and how the coup forced those who had left for urban areas to return home. Because Makini’s chapter is so closely focused on personal narrative, she does not address the underlying causes of the coup or the political implications of the subsequent Australia-funded Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI).

The third and final portion of the collection is markedly less cohesive than the first and second parts. Bennett’s chapter, “John Burke, Historian and Collector,” begins part 3 with a somewhat dramatic shift away from the personal accounts of mobility in part 2. Bennett historicizes the movement of material culture from Solomon Islands to American museums after World War II. She traces the artifacts gathered by John Burke and the subsequent display of the collection in museums, which served to reinforce American notions of Pacific Islanders as “primitive” (267).

Yvonne Underhill-Sem’s “Silences
of the Discourse” urges greater attention to silences during interviews in ethnographic research. She does so by exploring the silences around birth and pregnancy in Wanigela, Papua New Guinea (227). During her research, Underhill-Sem noticed that the women she was interviewing would suddenly become quiet when she asked about pregnancy and birthing practices and experiences. In her essay, she delineates the possible reasons for these silences, including distrust of outsiders, Christian modesty, and shame, but Underhill-Sem ultimately concludes that the silences around pregnancy were due to the specialness of procreation in Wanigela culture (291). She encourages researchers to look deeper into the meaning of silences and to consider that silence is not always evidence of shame or lack of knowledge, but that it is often protective and designed to shield precious information from outsiders.

“Promoting Research in a Stubborn Environment,” by Gordon Leua Nanau, describes the challenges facing both Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers in Solomon Islands. Nanau explains how research regulations, created to protect Indigenous knowledge from covetous researchers, have inadvertently impinged on responsible analysts’ ability to conduct meaningful studies that could benefit Solomon Islanders (295).

Eric Waddell concludes the collection with “Without Sharing We Will Be like Leaves Blown in the Wind.” This chapter envisions the future of Pacific studies, highlights the increasing number of Indigenous scholars within the discipline, and reflects on the ways in which the field has grown (333).

Oceanian Journeys and Sojourns is a profoundly useful text for those interested in migration, mobility, and diaspora studies. It offers nuanced approaches to understanding Pacific movement at micro and macro levels and places a primacy on personal insights as well as Indigenous ways of knowing. This primacy disrupts classic academic approaches to migration that may be read as callous and “othering.” In addition to being an extremely valuable scholarly text, several of the Indigenous authors have incorporated their experiences as Pacific Islanders in academia into their chapters. These inclusions could also be personally enriching and inspirational for individuals facing similar challenges within the academy.

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