

## Book and Media Reviews

---

*The Contemporary Pacific*, Volume 28, Number 2, 491–529  
© 2016 by University of Hawai'i Press

is at once history and anthropology, cultural studies and critical studies, discourse analysis and geopolitical theorizing. This volume provides scholars and students with a highly readable model showcasing some of the ways in which a researcher's personal journey can serve as a useful roadmap to the past.

ANNE PEREZ HATTORI  
University of Guam

\* \* \*

*The Pacific Festivals of Aotearoa New Zealand: Negotiating Place and Identity in a New Homeland*, by Jared Mackley-Crump. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2015. ISBN 978-0-8248-3871-3; x + 217 pages, glossary, references, index. Cloth, US\$58.00.

The Pasifika Festival, the largest Pacific festival in the world, is held annually in March at Western Springs, Auckland. In 2012, it attracted between 100,000 and 200,000 people, including visitors, community members, and performers. In *The Pacific Festivals of Aotearoa New Zealand: Negotiating Place and Identity in a New Homeland*, Jared Mackley-Crump provides a welcome genealogy of this event, as well as other Pacific festivals, within the global context of "festivalization" and the specific sociocultural formations of race and migration policy in Aotearoa/New Zealand. The author adopts an interdisciplinary framework, making use of his ethnomusicology background, ethnographic fieldwork methods, and conceptual innovations drawn from Pacific and Indigenous scholarship. The key question guiding this wide-

ranging book is: "Do Pacific festivals reflect the ways in which the Pacific diaspora is constructed, is imagined, and has evolved in New Zealand?"

(4). *The Pacific Festivals of Aotearoa New Zealand* demonstrates this evolution through analyses of festival organization, musical performances, and interviews with key participants about identity, place, and belonging.

Part 1 provides a historical context for Pacific festivals in Aotearoa beginning with an overview of Pacific migration focused on the period from the mid-1960s through the mid-1970s. Major sociocultural and political policy changes during this time, such as the dramatic Dawn Raids of the mid-1970s, saw the deportation of thousands of Pacific people—many of whom were legal residents—and created widespread fear and mistrust. From this environment, the first festivals emerged as a creative response to marginalization. In subsequent decades, and as the New Zealand-born Pacific population has grown, new forms of cultural and political organization have emerged in concert with Pacific festivals around the country. Chapter 1 covers the origins of these and other multicultural festivals, in text and with tables, before moving on to an analysis of the Pasifika Festival and Wellington's Positively Pasifika Festival in subsequent chapters. While this in-depth documentation will no doubt be a very useful historical record for interested parties, it contains a level of detail that may not appeal to more generalist readers. This could also be said about the analysis of logistics, infrastructure, and event management of the festivals. Nevertheless, at various points throughout

this first part we are treated to some fascinating insights as to the workings of organizational structures, including the way stakeholders narrate their roles and tensions between government and community groups in terms of engagement and control of the final event's production.

Part 2 shifts focus to the "festival space," based on fieldwork at both the Pasifika and Positively Pasifika Festivals that included the author working with organizers in the lead-up to the events. Four key themes emerge that comprise the chapters: logistics, leadership, and development; performances; community; and place, identity, and belonging. Sensitively rendered interviews with key administrative staff, performers, and "village" stall coordinators are a highlight of the book. However, very little sense is given of the composition of the festivals' audiences, making it hard to gauge who attends. Are they predominately Pacific Islander? Or do Māori, Pākehā, and other non-Pacific people also attend? Nevertheless, Mackley-Crump creates intimate portraits of how Pacific identities are formulated in urban spaces as well as through transnational networks of kin and community. Hip-hop artist King Kapisi, for example, describes how his performances at Pacific festivals form part of his aim to inspire and "give back" to young Pacific people. Part of this obligation to the community also involves toning down swearing and performing the "happy" rather than the "angry" tracks, so as not to shame his family. Te Awanui "Awa" Reeder, of the group Nesian Mystik, humorously adds to this statement: "I'm not worried about the reviewers in the

magazine; I'm worried about Auntie going, 'You sucked'" (125).

Chapter 4 explores how Pacific festivals require specific types of leadership and engagement. These issues are explored through notions of "cultural competencies," "polycultural capital," and "edgewalking"—the ability to work across and between institutional cultures (such as local government) and Pacific communities. These festivals embody tensions evident in the broader community about the lack of culturally appropriate training and consultation, at the same time as they demonstrate ways in which capacity-building and community-development principles can occur in event management.

One issue that invariably arises at festivals is the question of cultural authenticity, resulting in the deployment of largely unhelpful dichotomies of "traditional" versus "contemporary" artistic forms. In an approach influenced by Pacific epistemologies and concepts such as "tauhi vā," Mackley-Crump demonstrates how sociocultural networks enfold people across time and space in a dynamic where traditions operate contemporaneously with the present and future. Tongan Bollywood, Samoan brass bands, and Pan-Pacific hip-hop and reggae combined with and alongside specific Island performance traditions are examples of these creative maneuvers.

What emerges is a picture of how Pacific communities negotiate group identities with reference to other populations both within Aotearoa and in the broader Pacific. The history of Pacific festivals bears witness to negotiations of relationships between

Māori and Pacific peoples that are enacted through public policy and community arts and between community groups. Festivals are also a vehicle for redefining relations between Aotearoa and the region as new urban Pacific identities are influenced by the multidirectional flows of people, goods, and information. All of this contributes to a fine-grained description of how the festival enacts a work of “territorialization,” creating pride in belonging to Pacific New Zealand, as evidenced, for example, in an older performer describing the festival as “part of the [migrant] dream,” in stark contrast to the 1970s when “our people were getting bagged and put down, called coconuts and losers” (178).

Much of *The Pacific Festivals of Aotearoa New Zealand* covers the layers of dialogue between communities and government policy and reveals the amount of hard work and unpaid labor that goes into the organization of community festivals. Understanding these historical configurations is particularly relevant given poor attendance at the latest Pasifika Festival, held in March 2015, where Pacific community groups criticized the hypocrisy of government funding cuts for the event while the Auckland City Council appeared to expect Pacific peoples to be the city’s “performing monkeys” or “pretty face,” as noted in an article by Fa’anana Efeso Collins in the July 2015 issue of *Islands Business*. The book is relevant to anthropology, Pacific studies, and festival studies as well as to ethnomusicology and tourism studies. It will also appeal to an audience interested in negotiations

of migrant identity in settler-colonial societies.

KALISSA ALEXEYEFF  
*The University of Melbourne*

\* \* \*

*The Things We Value: Culture and History in Solomon Islands*, edited by Ben Burt and Lissant Bolton. Canon Pyon, UK: Sean Kingston Publishing, 2014. ISBN 978-1-90774-21-8; 149 pages, photographs, endnotes, references, contributors, index. Cloth, US\$135.00.

*The Things We Value: Culture and History in Solomon Islands* derives from a Melanesian art project sponsored by the British Museum and the University of Cambridge Museum for Archaeology and Anthropology and funded by the British Arts and Humanities Research Council, 2005–2010. The first object of note for this book is its cover. The photograph on the cover conveys an immediate message. A young woman wearing beautiful shell ornaments holds up a camera through which she is obviously focusing on the reader of the book. The bright red color of the camera emphasizes its presence. The camera lens is no longer the colonial lens through which so many outsiders have viewed Solomon Islanders. That perspective has been reversed—a major objective of the book and of the conference that preceded it.

The title indicates the book’s focus: how and why things are valued by Solomon Islanders within their individual social contexts. These are the subjects explored by authors of the introduction and twelve chapters