

ing” (5). For a book that relies heavily on Marxist theory, this is a decidedly non-dialectical statement. One might argue that this gap is always being provisionally and strategically crossed, overcome, or displaced through social movements by Native Pacific peoples fighting wars, both discursive and real, on both Asian and American fronts. *Transpacific Imaginations* is an inspired and wide-ranging book that, like many works of literary history, would benefit from a bit more attention to the social.

JOHN EPERJESI
Kyung Hee University, Seoul

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The Future of Indigenous Museums: Perspectives from the Southwest Pacific, edited by Nick Stanley. Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2007. ISBN cloth, 978-1-84545-188-2; paper, 978-1-84545-596-5; ix + 268 pages, images, black and white photographs, contributor biographies, bibliography, notes, index. Cloth, US\$90.00; paper, US\$34.95.

“Indigenous” museums in the Pacific are inevitably a source of contention because they are deeply entrenched in colonial legacies. The transformation and evolution from museums representative of colonial legacies into indigenous museums and cultural centers have been concurrent with the independence of Pacific Island nations. If not synchronized with self-determination, the change in museums has been a result of the political shifts to indigenous leadership.

In this collection of thirteen essays focused on the southwest Pacific, the

authors follow Soroi Marepo Eoe and Pamela Swadling’s *Museums and Cultural Centres in the Pacific* (1991) in developing the theme of indigenous museums while also confronting the term “indigenous museum.” Editor Nick Stanley organizes the essays geographically, putting the institutions or programs on equal footing in this volume that redefines assumptions about museums in the Pacific. *The Future of Indigenous Museums* presents prominent museums alongside the unexpected alternatives to museums, such as the long-standing Papua New Guinea (PNG) National Museum flanking Eric Venbrux’s description of the Bathurst and Melville Islands as open-air museums where Aborigines, like the Kanak community of Lifou (explored by Tate LeFevre in chapter 5), orchestrate “exhibitions” of culture for tourists.

The sections on Island Melanesia, Northern Australia, and New Guinea are bolstered by concluding reflections by Robert L. Welsch and Christina Kreps about the complex roles and expectations ahead in the future for indigenous museums. The diverse group of specialists Stanley has chosen—scholars and cultural practitioners—makes for a dense volume of experiences, ideas, and anticipation. Invested specialists like Lissant Bolton explain programs, such as Vanuatu Cultural Centre’s Fieldworkers and Women’s Culture Project, with which she has long been involved. Pioneering indigenous professionals, such as Lawrence Foana’ota, director of the Solomon Island National Museum and Cultural Centre, write from personal experience. This combination of museum

professionals and scholars produces a volume that provides an introduction to important museological concepts, concise histories of museums and cultural centers, and insight into what “indigenous” museums are and could be. While reading the volume does not require a background in museum studies, a familiarity with Pacific studies or anthropology is valuable.

The chapters explore the diverse range of cultural, social, economic, and political issues in museums, as in Diane Losche’s analysis of issues of representation at the Jean-Marie Tjibaou Cultural Centre in Nouméa, New Caledonia. Losche specifically analyzes the suppression of the historical violence associated with the birth of the cultural center that honors the assassinated Kanak leader. While recognizing the complexities of preserving and displaying histories fraught with violence, Losche concludes that by trying to “erase” Tjibaou’s death and the wound it left on the nation state, the Tjibaou Cultural Centre constitutes a new beginning for Kanak and Pacific cultures rather than simply a memorial (75).

Also focused on New Caledonia, Tate LeFevre’s essay describes how the dance troupe *Troupe du Wetr* is taking advantage of tourism. Instead of being victimized by the onslaught of cruise ships to Lifou, the troupe has created community cohesion and has invigorated interest in recovering Kanak traditions by developing new beginnings that turn entire communities into vibrant cultural centers without becoming “something in a museum” (89).

“The Journey of the Stars: Gab Titui, a Cultural Centre for the Torres

Strait” retells the twenty-year journey of Gab Titui’s development. Curators Anita Herle and Jude Philp write with Leilani Bin Juda, a member of the steering committee for Gab Titui, about using the process of display to promote elements of *kastom* “as a vital source of social cohesion,” by emphasizing the center’s role as facilitator of access to objects rather than as owner of the collection (107). These authors share sentiments similar to those of other authors in that the story of Gab Titui is about how indigenous agency can make museums into community investments rather than simply Western institutions in indigenous communities.

The origins of the PNG National Museum and Art Gallery were a direct result of the colonial government officials’ initial gathering of what have become the museum’s collections, but like Gab Titui, this has become a place that complements traditional indigenous methods of preservation comparable to the Haus Tambuna (House of the Ancestors [137]). This is further developed in Stanley’s “Can Museums Become Indigenous? The Asmat Museum of Culture and Progress and Contemporary Papua,” where he poses the notion that the indigenous and nonindigenous models may be less problematic than they appear. In particular, as many of the essays demonstrate, these museums have “been able to show how elements of social, material and spiritual life are not ‘sliced up’ but form a continuous present, albeit one that looks simultaneously backward, forward and sideways” (201).

While the authors are not impartial, recognizing their commitment and

investments to the range of museums is necessary and deserved when these museums and cultural centers engage with their communities, thrive, and continually evolve in spite of obstacles such as politics and internal institutional strife.

The Future of Indigenous Museums presents not so much a critique of museums and cultural centers in the southwest Pacific as their histories and accolades for what has been achieved. What comes through is advocacy for indigenous participation and agency in museums, which are validated by the experiences and histories of the examples included. This is appropriate as the museums, cultural centers, and programs described are important to the cultural invigoration, preservation of material culture, and the indigenization of museums occurring throughout the Pacific. The examples of museums—the statuesque architecture of Tjibaou Cultural Centre, the remote Gogodala Cultural Centre’s longhouse (in Western Province, Papua New Guinea) and Teptep, Papua New Guinea’s Bebek Bema Yoma (ancestors’ ceremonial compound or home-stead), or villages that have become museums themselves—provide an “alternative perspective, presenting us with new ways of thinking about what constitutes a museum, curatorial behaviour and heritage preservation” (223).

KATHERINE HIGGINS
University of Auckland

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Fast Talking PI, by Selina Tusitala Marsh. Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2009. ISBN 978-1-86940-432-1, 72 pages. Includes CD. Paper, US\$16.95.

I Can See Fiji: Poetry and Sounds, by Teresia Teaiwa. Sound recording. Featuring vocals and poetry by Teresia Teaiwa and Des Mallon on percussion. Sound design by Hinemoana Baker. Wellington: Fiery Canoe, 2008. In English, Fijian, and Māori. CD, poetry texts on insert. NZ\$24.99. Available online at <https://kstore.net.nz/hinemoana/store.html>

Fast Talking PI is the first collection of poetry by Pacific Islander writer and scholar Selina Tusitala Marsh. The collection, represented by the title poem, succinctly captures the complex, contrary, and sometimes fractured identities of contemporary Pacific Islanders.

Marketed as a mixed-media product, the collection includes an audio CD with selected poems performed by Marsh. While many poetry collections and a few audio CDs of poetry have previously appeared in the Pacific, Tusitala Marsh is the first to combine the two. This mixed-media format enhances the possibilities of understanding and appreciating the complexities of Pacific Islands poetry, bridging both contemporary literary traditions, and evoking traditional oral tradition, storytelling, and musical performance.

Marsh’s collection is a loving, poetic tribute that interweaves genealogies of Pacific culture, cultural icons, and cultural tradition. This is not just someone who has a keen ear for sound