

Book and Media Reviews

The Contemporary Pacific, Volume 34, Number 1, 227-247
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nographic lenses continues today as museums engage Oceanic communities with their collections. Many of the pieces show the interconnectedness and reimagining processes that take place between Oceania and colonial powers. The theme of past-becoming-present-becoming-future carries throughout the book, inviting readers to generate their own distinctive views or lenses for understanding ethnographic museums and the objects they house. This book is exciting because it emphasizes reconnecting with our ancestors and taking them with us to our present moment so we can create an intentional and unique perspective. It gives us permission to safely express ourselves and heal with the intention of acknowledging our ancestors' trauma.

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A Whakapapa of Tradition: 100 Years of Ngāti Porou Carving, 1830–1930, by Ngarino Ellis, with new photography by Natalie Robertson. Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2016. ISBN cloth and e-book, 9781869407377, 328 pages, illustrations. NZ\$69.99.

In *A Whakapapa of Tradition: 100 Years of Ngāti Porou Carving, 1830–1930*, Ngāti Porou carving, history, and people are honored through skillfully woven images and stories. Supplementing the discussion with new photography from Natalie Robertson, Ngarino Ellis highlights the roles, works, and genealogies of six key carvers from the Iwirākau School of carving in Waiapu Valley,

Aotearoa/New Zealand, and illustrates the school's transformative impact on Māori art forms. In doing so, she brings fresh views on what it means for art to be “traditional” or “contemporary,” transporting the reader between fascinating stories and Robertson's wildly expressive photos of landscapes, meeting houses, and chapels and portraits of ancestral members of the Ngāti Porou community.

The book's six chapters progress chronologically from 1830 to 1930 and detail the changes in both Māori carving and Māori social practices over that time. Through this exploration of the past, which covers Māori cosmology, innovative Māori carvers, and the main contemporary sites of Iwirākau carving, Ellis shows readers how different art styles and forms of carving emerged. The community was deeply involved in the construction, blessing, and preservation of Māori architecture, including both traditional meeting houses and churches. By the second half of the book, Ellis's argument is clear: Māori art and tradition provide opportunities for carvers to both innovate and learn from their ancestors, reconnecting past and present as they hone their craft. Robertson's photos complement each chapter, visually demonstrating the changes over time, and each viewing reveals something new to the reader. The book concludes with two supplements: a “Select List of Iwirākau Meeting Houses,” which provides the timeline of construction for and present location of each of the major structures featured in the book, and a list of “Occasional Carvers of the Iwirākau School,” which documents

the lives and works of fourteen other carvers from the same time period.

Throughout the book, Ellis considers the carvers' work in relation to the historical New Zealand Wars, Christian missions, and the role of Pākehā (New Zealand European [261]) patrons. She navigates these tensions by fairly presenting the Pākehā side of the history of Māori art while carefully assuring the reader that this is a story told on behalf of her community. In particular, she notes that oral history "reveals insights about the nature of Maori art that we would not get from an archaeological perspective" (24). Māori language, chants, poems, and other echoes of history fill the pages as we learn that carvers and patrons (both Māori and Pākehā) alike were "agents of change, driving new directions in art and architecture for the benefit of the people" (98).

Ellis's focus in chapter 2 on chapels and the Pākehā influence on Māori art engages in Pacific Islands studies' ongoing negotiation of what its content and boundaries should be. In her discussion, Ellis skims the boundaries of "traditional" and "contemporary" Māori art, symbols, people, and places, arguing that while the physical structure and design of buildings such as the earliest chapels in the Waiapu Valley (the Whakawhitirā II and Rangitukia II) may have changed over time, the buildings' primary purposes for the community have largely remained the same, making more recent constructions as Māori as any other "traditional" structure (58–59). When discussing new art form ideas articulated by the Waiapu Valley community, Ellis explains that "the encouragement of new forms of

decoration reveals the extent to which tradition is a process, characterised by the fact that . . . there *was* no model" (59). The chapels themselves, with decorations formerly considered radical, soon became a tradition through repeated use and construction (57–59).

The range of Robertson's photography for the book calls for special notice. Grand double-page photos introduce readers to settings described in the book, such as the Waiapu River (8–9), or offer close-ups of Māori structures and carvings, such as poupou (carvings on the walls of meeting houses) of contrasting colors placed alongside one another (120–121), that emphasize the carvers' unique personalities and attention to detail. Robertson's stylistic choices and angles vividly express her voice alongside Ellis' storytelling. To me, photography is arguably a digital form of carving, as the photographer attempts to capture and memorialize sculpture for future generations. In some sense, the carver and photographer are both witnesses retelling events in history, whether they be legends of long ago or more recent occurrences.

Ellis and Robertson challenge the precepts of tradition in Māori art while also acknowledging that the continued use of traditional forms and types of decoration over time have "ensured their survival and continued relevance" (245). One may wonder at what point modern patterns become traditional (211) or ask how artists continue to be guided by the past by putting it behind them (97). For example, the *whare whakairo*, or decorated communal meeting house (263), became a "site in which to engage

with modernity as well as to negotiate the past” (98). However, Ellis cautions against presentist views when looking back at the past. In the case of early colonial collecting habits, for instance, we must view collections “in the context in which they occurred, rather than applying contemporary sensibilities to them” (204).

A *Whakapapa of Tradition* offers much insight into art, artists, and their role in our modern cultures. That said, given my own curiosity about the stories behind intriguing photos, I would like to have known how the photos were taken, what they mean to the photographer, and what her physical journey of coming to these items and places involved. However, as the saying goes, a picture already tells a thousand words. Ellis ultimately looks to the future of digital art forms and Indigenous use of these new tools and platforms to preserve our traditions. She recommends identifying what was once there in order to recover visual traditions lost to museums and to continue “building new knowledge and artworks to enrich us all” (246). “Tradition,” she says, “was at the same time retained and yet broken in order to create a structure that made explicit hapū [sub-tribe] and iwi [tribe] identity in new and meaningful ways” (61, 259). Her insights can motivate and embolden us to continue finding creative ways to both break free of the confines of this word and preserve our culture in the digital age.

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Hawaiian Language: Past, Present, Future, by Albert J Schütz. Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2020. ISBN hardback, 978-0-8248-6982-3; ISBN paper, 978-0-824869830; xi + 327 pages, tables, lists, pictures, notes, references, index. Hardback, US\$82.00; paperback, US\$28.00.

The manifold intrigue and value of Pacific languages include the way each language has its own unique story, history, and development spanning long periods of time. In *Hawaiian Language: Past, Present, Future*, Albert J Schütz focuses on the past, present, and possible futures of the Hawaiian language. Crucial to diving into the study of any Pacific language is the understanding that language is not simply a combination of sound systems and syntactical rules, of words and utterances, but also a fully integral and entangled aspect of the cultural and social fabric of its speakers and their home (is)lands. In brief, Schütz’s work stands as a strong reminder that anyone engaging with the Hawaiian language and the history of its study should be guided by the idea that language is rooted in Hawaiian culture and will inevitably be a personal encounter that summons into view the reader’s positionalities.

The book is divided into five categories: “History,” “The Alphabet,” “The Effects of Writing,” “Words and Word Books,” and “Changes.” These categories outline the developments of the Hawaiian language and are supported by tables, photographs, and early Hawaiian language resources. To understand the Hawaiian language, it is imperative to know where it originated. Archeologi-