

**Oceanian Journeys and Sojourns: Home Thoughts Abroad.**  
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As a recent returnee to Samoa, *Oceanian Journeys and Sojourns: home thoughts abroad* (2015) has come at a timely moment in my life. Throughout the text I reflected on my own family's mobility journey since leaving these shores as a child in 1986. Education and employment opportunities were key narratives of our sojourn to New Zealand and Australia. Now, thirty years later, my circular journey has been influenced by 'aiga (family), genealogical connections, and Sāmoa as my ancestral home. As editor Judith Bennett writes: "For some the return may be in their lifetime or that of children or descendants because, for most Pacific people, there is always a connection to ancestral home places" (p.12).

This collection of twelve essays is divided into three parts. The first titled 'People and Pacific Places' introduces the 'heart' of mobility, as Bennett highlights the life and work of scholar Murray Chapman, himself a sojourner who has navigated the movement of people in Oceania among other places. Metaphors play a key role in understanding mobility, with particular reference to Joel Bonnemaïson's (1994) analogy of the 'canoe' and 'tree' in Vanuatu which has salience throughout the text and narratives. Through an interview with David Gegeo, it was heartening to read Chapman's story about his early academic life and the influential people who guided his canoe. His foresight to question the rigid economic paradigm of migration began in Tasimaïri in the 1960s with his humble 'retrospective mobility register' research tool (p.47). As these essays reveal, Chapman's work has been a significant departure point for the authors and their own journeys.

In Part Two 'Pacific People in Movement', Sa'ililemanu Lilomaiava-Doktor emphasizes the 'va (social space) in Sāmoan culture as the central metaphor to understanding life cycles (funerals) and events (church dedications) that influence Sāmoan mobility: "The relationship between physical and conceptual spaces can be grounded in examination of metaphors, which are simultaneously part of cultural communication and reflections of social relationship" (p.91). Of interest were the 'improper mobility' categories that are associated with 'aimless wandering' (p.77). This point is carried through by Lola Quan Bautista who acknowledges the people movement in Satowan Atoll located in Chuuk is "a highly complex phenomenon" (p.93). The dynamic interactions demonstrate nuanced mobility factors such as 'no roots and 'false wandering' over the common theories of 'urban drift' and 'education explosion' (p.124). For Asenati Liki the key reference point for understanding Teine uli or Melanesian-Sāmoan women is through 'kinship'. 'Aiga relationships that were formed within the boundaries of the colonial copra plantations now extend beyond these sites

to places such as Vaitele and New Zealand. As Liki asserts “For Teine uli identification with ‘aiga relations has been a far more enduring reality than with other identities (as labourers, for example) often imposed by outsiders” (p.137). Raymond Young’s analysis through the narratives conveyed by interviewees Fane, Sera, Pita, Mele and Laisa exemplifies the ‘embodied geography of movement’ framed within the Lakeban and Fijian experience. This in turn links people, pathways and places (p.190). On a personal journey Tarcisius Tara Kabutaulaka presents the various inflections that saw him leave his veraqu (home) as a child, his central point of reference. His reflection on *tuhu vera* (changed places) provided insight into his layered identities as he moved to and from Tasimaui, Honiara, Fiji, Australia and Hawai’i. He writes: “I belong to multiple worlds, yet am rooted in Tasimaui” (p.216). Jully Makini’s poem ‘The Ethnic Tension’ references volcanic eruptions, cyclones, and tsunami in response to the conflict in the Solomon Islands. Her essay documents Honiara before independence, and changes in the raw political landscape before RAMSI (Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands). Despite security anxieties, various groups and associations responded to the crisis. In her poem ‘Tears over Honiara’ she writes “I cried for the good times, which will never more come” (p.227). For Makini this experience will take time to heal.

In Part Three titled ‘People, Culture and Research’ Bennett outlines her search for American naval officer Lieutenant John Burke, a military historian during the Second World War and his collecting activity in Melanesia. Burke’s collecting and the dispersal of objects to various museums in the United States and elsewhere revealed a complex chain of object mobility, from village to port and beyond Melanesia. His service had taken place in the context of war, complicated by the terms of British administration. However simultaneously it seems Burke had a role in indigenous politics. The subsequent framing of these collections in institutions nullify’s Burke’s narrative due to his sudden death in 1946, as Bennett writes: “Perhaps Burke the historian may have had more to tell than Burke the collector” (p.269). Yvonne Underhill-Sem critiques the ‘silences’ in research methodology as she asserts the “need to be more critical in our analysis of how we know what is not said and what ‘the unsaid’ means” (p.278). In the context of ‘mobility of the body’ in Wanigela, Papua New Guinea, Underhill-Sem critiques the ‘discursive construction’ of maternal and pregnancy spaces. For the women she interviewed, the silences articulate a way of knowing, understanding and seeing the world, which needs to feature more prominently in discussions around women’s bodies. Gordon Leua Nanau presents the mobility of ‘research’ in the case of the Solomon Islands. He highlights the challenges of fostering a research culture due to funding, legislative clarity, intellectual property and local and international collaboration. Nanau’s analysis reveals a complicated and shifting perception of research, and its national and regional implications. Going forward the Solomon Islands National University together with the government requires a working partnership to ensure how research can reflect policies it seeks to develop and implement. As the last chapter, Eric Waddell makes several key points around the premise that “Oceania is as much about movement and networks, both within and beyond the region, as it is about deeply rooted communities” (p.336). In reflecting on his engagement, Waddell argues

that the Pacific Studies programme needs to be embedded in an 'evolving regional reality' (p.323). This entails the 'awful truth' that Oceania has moved on. Pacific Studies since the 1990s is now facing another shift, one that will need to include multiple perspectives, voices, approaches to knowledge, learning objectives, and a sense of place, oriented by scholars of Pacific heritage, and centered on 'lived and shared experience' (p.341). The future of Oceania will need to be transformative.

The editor and authors are commended for producing a diverse collection of essays that make a significant contribution to the complex discourse associated with 'Oceanian Journeys' of past, present and future. Its rich stories of mobility and circulation offer new perspectives on how people have (and are) engaged with their own journeys in Oceania. The challenges of identities, movement, histories, and place reveal a moving centre and periphery.