

whom, like Selwyn Cushing and John Anderson, remain prominent today. The reasons why the TSB proved them all wrong comes through clearly: the desire of Taranaki people (and more widely New Zealanders) to put their money in a bank of 'their own'; the immense financial strength TSB had built up through conservative policies in distributing profits; and the innovative approach to marketing and new products followed by its management. Taranaki and New Zealand patriotism were not carelessly given free rein by the trustees — they knew how strong their institution was. Furthermore, that financial strength allowed the bank to invest in innovation, even when some of its investments, like the Centre Court complex in New Plymouth, proved problematic. The tireless lobbying of Ron Barclay, former Labour MP and TSB trustee, may have helped mitigate government pressure. Ironically Barclay had been an advocate of a more liberal distribution of profits in the mid-1970s, which would have seen the bank much less able to remain independent in the 1980s. Interestingly, the Reserve Bank appears to have been less keen on bringing about the amalgamation than Treasury.

There was understandable suspicion that the refusal of the National-led government in 1999 to make any sale of the bank subject to approval by 75% 'of the people of Taranaki', and widespread criticism of TSB's low dividend policy, indicated continued dissatisfaction in financial circles with the bank's independence. Proposals from the Labour–Alliance government and NZ Post to incorporate the TSB in what was to become Kiwibank also threatened its autonomy. With no assurance as to what might happen to the state-owned entity if National returned to power, perhaps as early as 2002, the Taranaki people wisely stayed out. Indeed, from 2001 the TSB went more thoroughly nation-wide, opening branches in other cities, principally in the North Island, to complement its well-established electronic banking facilities.

From Faith to Fortune brings the TSB story up to the end of 2009, as the collapse of shonky finance companies and the bank's strength and excellent customer service brought it almost an embarrassment of New Zealand deposits. Again, its conservative lending policies stood it in good stead.

The author, a former journalist, writes in a very clear and readable style, and seeks to place the bank's history into wider developments in New Zealand's society and economy. Inevitably some minor blemishes slip through: deaths in New Zealand from the Spanish Influenza in 1918 were under half, not 'more than the number of soldiers who had lost their lives in the five previous years of war' (p.34); and when Robert Muldoon became Minister of Finance in 1967, he was not 'to hold the post for the next 17 years' (p.83). For such a substantial book there are remarkably few proofreading errors: 'feedbank' appears for 'feedback' (p.134), 'principle' for 'principal' (p.160) and 'Anne Pod' for Anne Podd (p.228). It is a pity that no footnotes or endnotes are provided, but *From Faith to Fortune* is excellently produced and illustrated. David Walter and Dunmore Publishing have done the TSB proud.

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Trading Nature: Tahitians, Europeans and Ecological Exchange. By Jennifer Newell. University of Hawai'i Press, Honolulu, 2010. 296pp. US price: \$45.00. ISBN 978-0-8248-3281-0.

JENNIFER NEWELL'S *Trading Nature: Tahitians, Europeans and Ecological Exchange* is beautifully presented, well researched and written in a style that effectively and eloquently transports the reader to another place and time. This book explores the complexities of cross-cultural exchanges between Europe and Tahiti and the neighbouring Society Islands from 1767. It challenges the notions of a passive Pacific and an ecologically destructive

Europe. Put succinctly, it underlines ‘the mutuality of agency across the cultural divide’ (p.6). Newell’s skill as an ethnographer and her personal affiliation with Tahiti make her work stand out from others by presenting an environmental history through both a Western and a Pacific lens. The strength of Newell’s scholarship lies in her commitment to anthropological detail, which produces a distinctly Pacific perspective, and in her analysis of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century literature and art. From these sources she uncovers recognizably different perceptions of the landscape, plants and animals. Her research emphasizes the social and cultural influences and implications associated with ecological exchange, as well as the environmental factors at play.

Part One, entitled ‘New Shores’, explores cultural interpretations of the landscape and its elements, and highlights the reciprocity of exchange. In 1767 Captain Samuel Wallis and the crew of the HMS *Dolphin* made contact with Maohi, the people of the Tahitian islands, and through crude communication initiated an era of cross-cultural exchange that had lasting and far-reaching effects. They stayed for three weeks, resupplied their ship with food and stores, and learned aspects of Tahitian culture. This would prove essential for ongoing trade and exchange. The men left a British flag, three guinea hens, a pair of turkeys, a pregnant cat and a garden planted with peas.

During the nineteenth century, Tahiti was host to a great number of British ships over an extended period of time, providing a convenient and reliable place to replenish ships’ stores and recuperate after months at sea. Items such as clothes, trinkets, nails and scissors were traded for pigs, fruit, fish and other plant and animal products. Tahitian chiefs or *ari’i* managed the supply of goods, frequently using this position to their political advantage. Newell shows that the relative ease with which trade developed was due largely to how Maohi perceived their environment and managed their natural resources.

Maohi viewed the natural world as ever-changing, fluid and active. These perceptions allowed them to manage and define new roles for the animals and birds they traded. Trade with Europeans brought social change and an environmental impact unprecedented to the islands. Maohi’s ability to adapt to this change reflects their perception of the land as transformative and consequently negotiable and helps to explain why the islanders parted with items of relative value. By contrast, the European perceptions — which Newell determines through the words and actions of botanist Joseph Banks, ship’s mate George Tobin and missionary John Jefferson — were more rigid and tightly classified, and included an objectification of the land brought about by the industrial revolution.

Part Two ‘Into Tahiti’ explores the introduction of mammals, birds and plants to the Pacific by James Cook, Louis-Antoine Bougainville, William Bligh, George Vancouver and members of the London Missionary Society. Through case studies, Newell explores the ecological and social impact caused by the introduction of cats, citrus fruit, guava and goats to Tahiti. The integration of European species into Maohi life, including both the long- and short-term advantages and detrimental effects, are explored in detail. The author presents the movement of plants out of the Pacific as arising from little more than European curiosity.

Plants and animals were brought to Tahiti primarily to establish a provisioning trade with Europeans. By the nineteenth century, however, a fascination with the natural world equalled Europe’s desire to put new lands and new resources to use. Much to the islanders’ amusement, Europeans collected specimens and curiosities to take back home and place within ever-increasing classificatory systems. Ecological exchange in Tahiti, argues Newell, was not simply a show of imperial power and control. Rather, it was born out of a necessity for fresh provisions, which moved quickly into curiosity, which soon grew into European benevolence and condescension.

Newell’s chapter ‘Chiefly Cattle’ explores the introduction of cattle to Tahiti and Hawai’i and challenges Alan Moorhead’s notion of ‘fatal impact’ and Mitchell’s ‘mournful exposés of the damage of European contact’¹. This comparative analysis between two nations

similar in climate and topography demonstrates how the success or failure of ecological exchange is dependent on not only environmental factors but also the people involved. It shows how the introduction of a species to a new environment does not necessarily spell disaster for the land, a point reiterated in Part Three, 'Out of Tahiti'.

'Out of Tahiti' looks at the transfer of breadfruit by William Bligh and the trade in salted pork. Alongside the familiar tale of mutiny and securing British interests in the Caribbean are fascinating details relating to the transfer of plants during the nineteenth century. Bligh's success in procuring, propagating and successfully transplanting over one thousand plants appears impressive. Finally, Newell examines the salted pork trade, looking at both the economics of trade and the role pigs played in traditional and contemporary Tahitian society. The evolution of the pig from an animal that represents the voice of god to a commodity that provides both financial and political gain is discussed.

Overall this book effectively illustrates how anthropological research can support an environmental history by providing an alternative perspective that has not arisen through Western analysis. Further references to work by historians such as Richard Grove would have supported and strengthened Newell's analysis, particularly her chapter on conceptual landscapes.² Also, the failure to address the impact of introduced disease is most surely an oversight. Introduced diseases are briefly mentioned in the conclusion to Part Two and were, according to Newell, proof to Maohi that their gods had withdrawn their support. Despite this, Newell's skill as a writer and researcher and her commitment to include a Pacific voice make this book both a pleasure to read and a valuable contribution to environmental historical scholarship.

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NOTES

1 See Alan Moorhead, *The Fatal Impact: An Account of the Invasion of the South Pacific*, Harmondsworth, 1987; Andrew Mitchell, *The Fragile South Pacific: An Ecological Odyssey*, Austin, 1989 (originally published in 1966).

2 Richard Grove, *Green Imperialism: Colonial Expansion, Tropical Island Edens, and the Origins of Environmentalism, 1600–1860*, Cambridge, 1995.

Pacific Ways: Government and Politics in the Pacific Islands. Edited by Stephen Levine. Victoria University Press, Wellington. 2009. 302pp. NZ price: \$74.99. ISBN 978-0-864736-17-8.

PACIFIC WAYS ENCOMPASSES STUDIES from 25 different countries, territories and colonies across Oceania. My initial reaction was to relate the volume to the Pacific Way ideology advanced by the late Ratu Sir Kamasese Mara, which became the foundation for Pacific regionalism. On closer reading, however, it does not focus on that socio-political ideology, but is a meticulous assessment of modern political and legal systems, institutions and processes in Oceania. Moreover, it is a descriptive appraisal of politics and governance in respective countries and of their interactions with the outside world.

The contributors successfully highlight issues that do not stand out in similar publications. The diverse political culture, languages, geographical size, colonial heritage, constitutions and institutions in Oceania resonate throughout the book. It effectively blends information on political histories, legal systems and future outlooks of countries, colonies and territories from various parts of Oceania. The political history tells of experiences with colonialism in