

**Edward Dallam Melillo, Ryan Tucker Jones, and James Beattie (eds)**

*Migrant Ecologies: Environmental Histories of the Pacific World*

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The Pacific Ocean ... still churns with its colonial and nuclear legacies.

(Teaiwa 1994: 88).

Prefacing this important contribution to transpacific understanding, J.R. McNeill suggests that 'Pacific history acquires a measure of unity and coherence when it becomes Pacific environmental history' (p. xiii). The volume builds on 'the new thalassology' of oceanic studies (Horden and Purcell 2006: 723). *Migrant Ecologies* will appeal to faculty and students in (environmental – and wider) history, geography, Tangata Moana, anthropology, sociology, medical history (re epidemics), food systems, science communication and environmental and development studies. The standard of scholarship is high. Thorough footnotes and source references offer springboards for further research.

Fifteen stand-alone contributions feature every scale of inquiry, from the microecologies of a particular site to species traversing the Pacific's past and present. So Emily O'Gorman describes how research into Latham Snipe migration accelerated trans-Pacific conservation treaties that can give traction to wetland preservation: '[T]he international journeys made by the birds changed the nature of these places politically. ... A focus on non-human agency can draw us into different kinds of histories and into a consideration of the journeys plants and animals take themselves on, not just the flows we send them on' (p. 237).

While the book eschews section headings, chapters resonate powerfully. Ryan Tucker Jones, Samantha Gregory Rosenthal and Lissa Wadewitz attend to whaling at different scales to enlightening effect. Kristin A. Wintersteen's account of twentieth century 'tuna wars' and the gradual emergence of international agreements for stock 'management' is a revealing account of species loss and belated regional cooperation in the face of exploitation.

The discrete chapters document the damage done to Indigenous languages and ecologies via the 'transpacific ... cross-pollination of the settler-colonial project' (p. 149). Thus William Cavert's use of French archives traces colonialist science, metropolitan hubris and inconsistency over management policy for Tahiti's plundered oyster fishery; Katsuya Hirano elucidates Meiji Japanese imperial subjugation of Ainu people and ecologies (much of it shaped by Horace Capron who had dispossessed First Nation tribes in Texas); Holgar Droessler reviews German state and commercial control in Sāmoa, while Edward Dallam Melillo and Ha'alilio Solomon's work with Native Hawaiian language sources shows both Indigenous resistance to rapid and destructive colonising projects and some benefit from coffee commerce.

Melilio's chapter cites Hawaiian language newspapers to outline Kanaka Māoli agency in the Kona coffee trade. Ha'alilio Solomon's discussion of *kai-uka* directionality and the impact of colonising foreshore developments recalls evidence of witnesses before Aotearoa New Zealand's Waitangi Tribunal (2004), while his discussion of the concept of kuleana evokes Māori responsibilities inherent in rangatiratanga and mana motuhake (p. 188) (See also Waitangi Tribunal 2021 for an extensive list of the many environmental history reports prepared for Tribunal inquiries). James Beattie's close analysis of how the ecocultural networks of Chinese migrants in New Zealand flowed into engagement with Taranaki Māori in the harvest and export of fungus from remnant rainforests also examines the major trade and exploitation of sea cucumbers and fur seals within the context of SE Chinese maritime dominance.

Both Ruth A. Morgan and Frank Zelko offer compelling accounts tracking the destructive legacies of nuclear testing. Zelko provides a concise history of anti-nuclear activism and US failures in post-test reparation and remorse for Marshall Islanders and Navy personnel subject to test radiation. Morgan writes powerfully about the birth of Australian research on nuclear radiation and climate change, including the impact of Keeling's work in Australia (see also work by Keeling's Kiwi protege, Lowe).

In his satirical 1983 story 'The Tower of Babel', Epeli Hau'Ofa skewers paternalistic Western 'development' proffered by 'Appropriate Authorities' and 'The Great International Organisation', all poorly implemented by the 'Wise Men at the Thinking Office' and squads of dubious consultant expats (pp. 26, 20). In one 'Grassroots' Scheme, Australian 'Sharky' Lowe, 'a Great Expert with lifelong experience of handling natives' converts all the Indigenous small-scale sustainable fishery operations to run with motors and boats (handily made by Sharky's second employers). Large loans are accrued by locals, who eventually decline to partake in the (over)fishing and constant labour that Sharky envisioned. 'In helping the development of Tiko, Sharky had helped the development of himself and his companies most generously' (p. 23). Many Great Experts stalk *Migrant Ecologies*, altering territories and traditions through coercion and control: for instance, I recalled Hau'Ofa's gleeful, scathing insights whilst reading about failures to establish a citrus monocrop industry in the Cook Islands.

While the volume lacks a major Māori contribution, work by Māori and Pasifika scholars foregrounds Indigenous resilience (see Bargh 2024, Rāwiri 2022, Ruru, 2018 Salesa 2023, Teaiwa 1994, for example). *Migrant Ecologies* joins the flow of scholarship at the accessible and powerful nexus of environmental histories, science communication and the profoundly pluralist interdisciplinary work of reconciliation to trace the consistent mimics of colonial power and the enduring multiplicities of Indigenous resistance across time and site.

In closing the collection, Morgan argues 'by placing the Anthropocene,

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environmental historians can contribute to a more just and equitable future' (p. 271). Is remembrance and an honest reckoning enough to counter populist pushback against Indigenous rights (Duff 2023)? Clearly there is more education and outreach needed, as well as careful work in communication, to foster change (Beausoleil 2020). At this time of 'a sense of near violent rupture between the world of words and the world beyond them' many continue to ponder modalities of implementation, education and dialogue (Klein 2023: 153). Research that reveals the roots for the justice of (re)conciliation and deep change through species and site might begin to bridge that rupture. *Migrant Ecologies* argues that dominating societies and processes must face the inter-generational theft and silencing of Indigenous voices they have imposed on this ocean and its peoples.

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