

**MAKING OUR PLACE: Exploring Land-use Tensions in Aotearoa New Zealand.** *Co-edited by Jacinta Ruru, Janet Stephenson, Mick Abbott. Dunedin, NZ: Otago University Press; Portland, OR: Distributed by International Specialized Book Services, 2011. 243 pp. (Tables, figures, maps.) US\$45.00, paper. ISBN 978-1-877372-88-94.*

Place-making is a concept that has been added to the toolbox of social scientists in recent years. The double-barreled nature of the term indicates that places are not to be thought of as static, self-enclosed entities, but rather as changing products of historical praxis. Thus, place-making draws attention to the need to think of places as dynamic configurations crafted by history in a unique melding of practices, linkages and power relationships. Moreover, people relate to places proactively, developing embodied relationships with them, as when they favour certain locations, while also investing them with cultural meanings. For these reasons, interest is emerging in the study of those historical processes, political projects and social practices that contribute to the ongoing constitution of place, locality, homeland and community in the context of local, regional and global entwinements.

This volume builds on these new insights into the “making of places” by exploring the narratives of conflict to be found along New Zealand’s coastlines and rivers, in the country’s forests and tussock uplands, and amongst other sacred, historic, rural and urban landscapes. The tension that is at the focus of the 12 essays collected here is almost without exception caused by land-use changes such as coastal development, energy infrastructure and dairy farming in specific areas where the local population feels passionate about the landscape and the wider environment. The central question addressed in all these essays is whether there are better ways to reconcile the tensions emerging from the interplay of peoples and places. How can a balance be struck between beauty and industry, for example, which are both vital to the economic wealth of New Zealand. In Aotearoa New Zealand this global question is locally compounded by claims of the country’s indigenous population, the Maori, for the return of their proprietary rights over lands and other natural resources of which they were largely dispossessed in the nineteenth century. Maori people often also express responsibility for sustaining an ecological balance and, as a consequence, they increasingly seek a share in governance over natural resources that have become icons of the nation’s image, such as the promotion of tourism. Furthermore, the transformation of the landscape has become more contentious over the years since the country as a whole is grappling with the challenges of contemporary technologies, such as the erection of large-scale wind farms on landscapes that are historically sacred and ecologically fragile.

Since the chapters focus on different aspects of the various tensions between peoples and places as well as between peoples in a place, the editors have clustered the essays into three sections representing three dominant

themes: challenges, transformations and negotiations. The first section opens with a lucid essay by Jacinta Ruru about the very complex legislative history and political responses to the customary ownership by Maori of the foreshore and seabed, which led to one of the most dividing disputes in New Zealand in recent years. The symbolic value of place names in New Zealand culture is explored in a chapter by Lyn Carter on the background of the debate about the spelling of a place name as either Wanganui or Whanganui. The ongoing tension between coastal development and landscape protection, which is an issue that is shared across New Zealand, is analyzed in a case-study of the Tutukaakaa coast.

The second series of essays discusses the legacies of major landscape transformations that have occurred since European colonization. Three chapters discuss the impact of colonial and post-colonial settlement. One discusses how early European surveyors trampled on the values, needs and expectations of Maori landowners, while a second explores the background of English, Scottish and Irish farmers who settled on the land that had been prepared by surveyors. A third traces the ecological transformations of Taranaki's original landscape from a unique reservoir of indigenous biodiversity to the devastating impacts of human settlement, to recent efforts to re-establish a linked network of the area's diverse ecological heritage. A final chapter in this section describes the architectural history of the country's largest city of Auckland and the historical symbolism of the landscape sprawling out of the isthmus.

The final set of chapters illustrates that contentious changes can be negotiated in order to develop creative and inclusive resolutions of place-centred conflicts. Linda Te Aho outlines the historic and symbolic importance of the Waikato River to the Tainui Maori people, which have successfully negotiated a co-governance arrangement for the purpose of restoring the river's ecosystem for future generations. Other essayists explore the potential impact of the dairying expansion planned for the iconic landscapes of the Mackenzie Basin, and the various strategies possible to mitigate the implications for tourism. Robert Joseph discusses the debate about the protection of Maori sacred sites in the context of development, in which Maori values and traditions are increasingly recognized. A final chapter analyzes resistance to wind farms and other renewable energy projects, suggesting that communities should be engaged before development processes begin in order to reduce local strife.

The concluding chapter compares and contrasts the diverging strands of analysis that are pursued in the various chapters, arguing that all land-use changes should be locally appropriate by recognizing multiple interests that emerge from various interactions between peoples and places. The book as a whole is nicely produced, with many black-and-white photographs in a format that might attract a wide audience. The potential implications of the essays are also far-reaching and may be of comparative interest for a

global readership, although I suspect that since all case-studies are based on controversies in New Zealand it will primarily appeal to local readers.

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TOON VAN MEIJL

**FOOD FOR THE FLAMES: Idols and Missionaries in Central Polynesia.**  
*By David Shaw King; Photography by Brian Carlson; Foreword by David Attenborough.* San Francisco: Beak Press, in association with Holberton Publishing, London; Seattle: Distributed by University of Washington Press, 2011. xv, 222 pp. (Figures, photos., illus.) US\$80.00, cloth. ISBN 978-1-90737-216-2.

David Shaw King's book, organized into seven chapters, focuses on the objects brought back during the first decades of the London Missionary Society (LMS) presence in Central Polynesia, which started in 1797. The author introduces the topic by looking at the Spanish missionaries who arrived twenty-two years before the LMS. For lack of knowledge of local languages, the difficulties encountered by the British missionaries were considerable. Feeling the culture was disappearing missionaries began documenting it. Even Vancouver witnessed as early as 1791 that changes had taken place in Tahitian society since his visits two decades earlier.

The second chapter recounts the early years of the London Missionary Society. The organization evolved in the wake of the revival of evangelism, which sought to bring religion to everyone and not just to the pre-chosen elect. After enthusiastic reports from William Carey working for the Baptist Missionary Society in Bengal, the LMS was founded as a nondenominational and ecumenical institution. The missionaries were, however, completely unprepared to go to Tahiti and suffered a succession of disasters. Eventually, after fifteen years, they began gaining ground thanks to the religious and political ascendancy of the paramount chief Pomare II who was baptised in 1812 after renouncing idolatry in 1806. The LMS missionaries received very little support from the directors back in England but luckily found an advocate in Samuel Marsden, who was based in Parramatta (Australia) and became the official LMS correspondent and agent. All by all the success of the mission was mixed.

The third chapter is wholly dedicated to the life of John Williams, whom the author regards as one of the most valuable sources for early Polynesian life. Williams' resourcefulness made him a key figure of the missionary effort. The reader learns about his evolution from an impious to a religious man. Williams quickly became familiar with Tahitian and had the necessary practical knowledge to build boats, make plaster out of coral, and work on the crystallization of sugar. He moreover was a good observer. Despite all his talents, conversion still caused unrest and power struggles. John Williams was eventually killed at 43 in 1839 in Vanuatu.

The fourth chapter describes the missionaries' attitude towards temples