on that she is not an insider, although she does spend time calibrating her “Auntie”
status, she does not refer to any of the people she talks story with as her informants or
participants, and rises to Aunty Eleanor’s challenge that she assert her point of view
without making herself the central subject of the story. A lesson Schachter derives
from Simeona’s writing is that mo’olelo is pedagogical; it is not only the account
of a single individual, but transmits knowledge and learning to future generations.
Schachter’s text is a meaningful addition to the canon of Hawaiian studies particularly
because of her analysis of the evolution of the HHCA, but especially because of the
Native Hawaiian subject-centred portrayal at the heart of the text. Whether the book
fulfils Simeona’s expectations of a biography or Ahuna’s maxim that a person writes
in order to create change, Schachter has reciprocated with something of value for the
‘ohana with whom she has spent so many years talking story.

Reference

Smith, Vanessa: Intimate Strangers: Friendship, Exchange and Pacific Encounters,
AUS$44.95 (soft cover).

MICHAEL REILLY
University of Otago

At the heart of Vanessa Smith’s fascinating book is a Tahitian word, taio, signifying
an “Oceanic friendship pact formalized with some degree of ceremony” (p. 69), with
persons from outside someone’s own kin group, and involving an ongoing sequence
of exchanges, including personal names as well as goods and services. It quickly
came to be used by European explorers to describe their cross-cultural relationships
with the men and women they perceived to have authority over the local people in
Tahiti and other islands. Taio is arguably the first Tahitian word that Europeans pick
up in their writings. Nonetheless, it is also a tantalisingly unknowable word which
disappears from use during the 19th century. Contemporary Maohi, ‘Indigenous Tahitians’, who Smith spoke to, have no recollection of it. It only exists in the archival
records of the Europeans visitors who experienced it. However, Smith’s book is not
an ethnographic reconstruction of ancient Tahitian forms and practices of friendship,
although these are alluded to. Instead, Smith utilises the concept of taio in order to
explore how Europeans responded to particular demonstrations of Oceanic cross-
cultural friendships, and what light these experiences throw on European ideas of
friendship. The Pacific Islanders who became taio to Europeans are viewed through
the writings of these friends and other European observers.

In the first half of this book, Smith creates a sequence of chapters that mark
moments in the early European exploration of Oceania, in particular of Tahiti and other
eastern islands. The first chapter looks at the welcoming crowds, highlighting their
significance in the “fraught problematic of cross-cultural encounter” in Oceania (p. 35).
Such meetings between visitors and locals led to the making of *taio* relationships, but these situations might also explode in violence, as Smith demonstrates when Cook died at the hands of an assertive Hawaiian crowd. Chapter 2 examines the nature of the *taio* friendship. Europeans recognised that for Tahitians these relationships were long-lasting and emotionally significant. Much puzzled and shocked Europeans about this concept, notably that by exchanging names and thereby identity, they might become a substitute husband for their *taio*’s chiefly wife. Making friends enabled Europeans to establish a sustainable system of trade, although they reacted cynically whenever their *taio* expressed any interest in receiving commodities. Chapter 3 investigates European ideas about the nature of friendship. By the 18th century they thought of it as an affective or sentimental relationship that transcended any materialistic expectations. But in an impressive review, Smith discerns much evidence for the cool calculation of what benefits came the way of being someone’s friend. The two-sidedness of European ideas of friendship were also revealed in the visitors’ contradictory responses to their *taios*’ open expectation of gift exchanges. Chapter 4 looks into the sceptical reactions of Europeans to displays of grief by Tahitian men and women during mourning ceremonies. The visitors thought these emotions insincere, excessive and contrived; more theatre than how a person should behave in real life. They preferred the restrained expressions by Tahitian men which better reflected their own inclination towards self command in situations of intense emotions.

In the second half of the book Smith focuses on individual stories and particular relationships between Oceanian and European explorers. Chapter 5 narrates the experiences of four Oceanians who journeyed back to Europe: Ahutoru, Tupaia (who died at Batavia), Mai and Lebuu. They and their European companions became, in the eyes of those who met them, “fellow travellers” whose “knowledge and authority became inevitably conjoined” (p. 182). Instead of focusing solely on them as part players in a larger and long-term project of imperialism, Smith argues for the possibility of viewing these travellers through the frame of friendship’s “fortuitous, fine-grained hierarchies and equalities” (p. 197). Chapter 6 re-examines the *Bounty* mutiny as an event prompted by the *taio* friendships formed by various crew members. In the moment of mutiny and in its aftermath at trial, judgements as to who supported Bligh or the mutineers also came down to “the slippery signs of friendly intentions” (p. 251), including such gestures as tears (or the lack of them). Ironically, those mutineers who got away to Pitcairn ultimately transformed their accompanying *taio* into servants (“*towtow*”), no longer equal partners. In doing so, their actions resemble those of later colonial settlements which reduced many Oceanians to a subordinate status in their own lands; a process that may explain, as Smith suggests, why the concept of *taio* disappears from use about that time. The final chapter looks at several friendship exchanges in the Marquesas Islands. The beachcomber, Edward Robarts, successfully established a series of exchanges whereas his near contemporary, the missionary William Crook, reluctantly recognised the implicit reciprocal expectations in such relationships, preferring one-way conversions to Christianity, without success. A Catholic mission also failed when friars refused making friends of local leaders, in contrast to their interpreter, Maximo Rodriguez, who formed local relationships by helping out in the local community. Such gestures anticipate Bronislaw Malinowski’s fieldwork methods built on “affective engagement” with the community (p. 293).
Smith has written a perceptive, authoritative and cross-culturally informed work. Its editing and presentation is excellent, with few defects: an incomplete sentence (p. 89) and an incorrect word (“then” instead of “than” at line 27, p. 81). A particular strength is the extensive quotation from the primary sources, including texts on friendship and explorer journals. By choosing friendship as her subject Smith explores the ways people from both sides of the beach came to know each other as particular individuals, even if only for a short while. Together they created something that was, as Smith argues, more reciprocal and dialectical; a relationship resembling the partial and particular one of the taio. Arguably, such gestures of intimacy have helped many colonised nations, with their legacies of inter-cultural oppression, to survive and perhaps even to prosper.


MICHAEL REILLY
University of Otago

James Morrison’s two part journal and account form one of several early visitor narratives that provide foundational texts for understanding particular ancient Pacific Islands societies. As in Morrison’s case these guests stayed long enough to become culturally competent participants in local society. They were also sympathetic observers who tried to report what they saw or experienced as accurately as they could. Also like Morrison, they were not strongly biased by past European intellectual speculations about Pacific peoples. Such writings provide a particular kind of Indigenous history, as told by outsiders with inside knowledge, that supplements the oral traditions recorded by Islander experts. The editors and their publishers are to be congratulated on producing a new and accessible version of this important work which will continue to be valued by Pacific scholars, and also by those fascinated by an eye-witness account of a famous naval mutiny.

The first half of Morrison’s text forms a self-contained journal. The first chapter commences with embarkation in England and takes the reader to the moment of mutiny and the division of the ship and crew between William Bligh and the mutineers under Fletcher Christian. The second chapter recounts the unsuccessful attempt to settle on the island of Tubuai. Morrison puts on record a fairly comprehensive survey of the observable elements of the local culture; one not subsequently described by outsiders until 1827. Chapter 3 begins with the return to Tahiti, the division between those who stayed, and those who stuck with Christian, and what Morrison and the others did during their residence amongst their Tahitian friends. Chapter 4 recounts the capture and incarceration of the Tahiti-based mutineers on the Pandora, their subsequent wreck and return to trial in England.

Morrison’s naval identity is prominent in the journal, especially in the earlier pages as he records nautical information such as winds and distances travelled. He also carefully notes Bligh’s behaviour, both as captain and purser, towards the officers and