
Without such evidence, and without an explicit guiding interpretive framework, Feil’s speculations regarding the evolution of Highlands societies amount to little more than standard structure-functional claims of interrelationships extrapolated into the past. However plausible some of his proposals may seem, without systematic comparison and a clearly articulated theory of social change, he has only invited potshots from particularistic ethnographers, who are provided here with a whole flock of sitting ducks.

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The New Guinea Highlands have held a prominent if not dominant place in the ethnographic perception of Melanesia, reflected, among others, in models delineating and causally linking Highlands patterns of big-manship, clan-parish organization, competitive
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exchange, pig production, and subsistence intensification. *Mountain Papuans* presents an ethnographic complement to and theoretical critique of much of this work on the basis of case studies from three cultures situated on the southern fringe of the New Guinea Highlands between elevations of 500 and 1500 meters. Each of the contributions adopts a diachronic perspective and uses detailed ethnographic exposition to illustrate processual linkages that crosscut traditional conceptual categories and reveal the impact of local cultural influence on sociodemographic development. As argued by Weiner (chapter 1), the volume presents a convincing theoretical counterthrust against infrastructural reductionism and typology. While the cultures considered—Etoro, Foi, and Daribi—have each been the subject of important monographs, significant new findings are presented here in each instance. The general culture area encompassed by these societies is also considered systematically for the first time by Weiner. This raises, by the very nature of the case, important questions about how regional analyses are to be configured in Melanesia.

Charles Langlas and Weiner (chapter 3) illustrate how Foi configurations of political and residential integration can oscillate over time between emphasis on big-man patronage and emphasis on clan solidarity. They conclude that the big-man’s clan and following are dialectically “created out of each other” (107) and that residential and political organization are processually intertwined in ways resistant to typological classification. The general terms of their argument—reminiscent of Leach on Highland Burma—are at the same time rigorously documented, attuned to current theoretical debates, and illustrative of exemplary corroboration between fieldworkers of different generations to transcend their initially competing views. The perspective developed may be widely applicable to the processual analysis of Melanesian social, political, and residential organization.

Roy Wagner’s contribution (chapter 2) portrays the complex process by which Daribi substance-lines (“clans”) and aggregations (“communities”) form and change. Central in this process are Daribi idioms of solidarity and differentiation in combination with kinship and marriage (as culturally constituted) to produce the splinterings and coalescences of Daribi local groups over time. Wagner’s criticism of structural-functionalism and his assessment that “the final arbiter of accuracy in social relations is meaning and point of view” (49) have been made elsewhere but are here illustrated through previously unpublished migration histories, maps, tables, and figures. Unfortunately, these data are not as clearly explicated or systematically linked to the general argument as might be hoped, but they do suggest diffuse migration and ethnogenic processes.

Raymond Kelly’s contribution (chapter 4) marshals detailed analysis of Etoro pig husbandry and comparative analysis of data from fourteen societies to reconsider the role of the pig in the prehistory of New Guinea. Kelly documents conclusively that non-intensive husbandry of semidomesticated pigs, based on extensive foraging in the wild, can result in per capita pig
holdings as high or higher than those found in core areas of the New Guinea Highlands. The prevailing assumption that high per capita pig holdings were of key causal significance in Highlands socioeconomic intensification is replaced with a more sophisticated model in which intensive fodder-feeding arose in an attempt to maintain already high pig per capita holdings under conditions of human population increase. This fodder-feeding, in turn, was a precondition for large-scale pig slaughter and the transaction of live animals characteristic of Highlands ceremonial exchanges. The allocation of prestige in this process, however, is shown to be culturally rather than ecologically constituted: high male prestige is not an inevitable result (or motivation) of large pig holdings. Using the Etoro as a prototype, Kelly proceeds to consider a range of relevant archaeological evidence and develops a revised model of Highlands prehistory—along the way generating empirically testable hypotheses and refuting several commonly held views. Kelly's argument constitutes a great advance in the modeling of Highlands prehistory and is sure to be a major source of future refinement and debate. Combining detailed primary documentation, incisive comparative analysis, and bold conclusions, the paper is a milestone of research concerning a topic of much current interest.

Andrew Strathern's concluding chapter juxtaposes the book's ethnographic and theoretical contributions against findings from the New Guinea Highlands as such. He relates the ethnohistory and ethnogenesis of the Daribi to that of the Wiru and implicates larger patterns of precontact migration in the Southern Highlands. The potentials and limits of Langlas and Weiner's big-man-cum-clan model are explored for Highlands societies, which are seen as larger in size and less quickly redefinable than their fringe-group counterparts. For Kelly's analysis of pig husbandry, Strathern notes the continued existence of limited forage-feeding in the Highlands proper, remarks on similarities as well as differences between Highlands and fringe areas with respect to pigs' symbolic value, and underscores the general need for further research on pig husbandry in different areas of New Guinea. Strathern then uses the findings of Mountain Papuans, to elaborate his 1982 analysis of exchange, cannibalism, and social organization in Highlands versus fringe areas of New Guinea. His general stance throughout is that of gentle devil's advocate, stressing at heart a greater emphasis on materialist and social organizational constraints but developing his points by implication and collage rather than by stark opposition to the other contributors. This is a fitting conclusion to the volume—pointing to complementary facts and orientations while remaining sensitive to the book's substantial ethnographic and theoretical contributions.

The main lacuna in the volume is an absence of perspectives by or centrally about women, who figure prominently in subsistence and sociopolitical matters focal to the authors' concerns. Remediating this difficulty is to an extent outside the parameters of the book as constituted, but can, I hope, be considered in future work by these
or other writers in articulation with the findings and perspectives here developed. As it stands, the volume presents a fine blend of quality ethnography, areal focus, and theoretical penetration. It is a vital companion piece to Andrew Strathern's edited Inequality in New Guinea Highlands Societies, engaging many of the same issues, but from an opposed areal and theoretical perspective. In the best academic tradition, this opposition is not polemical or ultimately negative, but dialectical and progressive.

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Oral narratives describing the history of Bellona Island, a Polynesian outlier in the Solomon Islands, recount that 195 homicides took place before the pacification of the island in 1938. This works out to an average of 9.3 homicides per generation in a population that was probably never much more than 450 people. These homicides were part of a pattern of feuding that sometimes continued for generations: one feud is described as involving twenty-eight separate encounters over the course of several hundred years.

In Vengeance Is Their Reply, Danish social scientist Rolf Kuschel records and analyzes these oral narratives about traditional feuding on Bellona. This book is the seventh volume in a series of books on the language and culture of Rennell and Bellona islands. Over the past thirty years, these Polynesian outliers have been systematically studied by a team of Danish and American researchers and are among the most thoroughly studied social systems in the Pacific. In a period when anthropology is given to interpretation and most publishers are parsimonious in printing materials for specialized audiences, the publications on Rennell and Bellona provide remarkably detailed ethnographic and linguistic information. Many volumes in this series include extended samples of Rennell-Bellona texts, both in the vernacular and in English translation. Kuschel's book continues this scholarly tradition and is another important contribution to the ethnography of Oceania.

Part 1 of Vengeance Is Their Reply describes the cultural and social factors that cause Bellona's homicides and feuding. Part 2 includes vernacular transcriptions and English translations of 150 oral narratives that describe these feuds and form the basis for the analysis in part 1. Kuschel criticizes most anthropological studies of feuding for their lack of detailed and long-term data. He explains one very admirable reason for including the narrative texts: "Thus by publishing the Bellonese material in its entirety, I want to make the primary data available to other scientists who, from other theoretical starting points, would like to