To be sure, it is asking a lot to look for such a conception. The essence of the small-island condition is its contradictions. Here are political units below the usual threshold of political viability, yet grimly reproducing the institutions and practices of large sovereign nations. Here are economies doomed to operate in symbiosis with larger neighbors or patrons (a status often mislabeled “dependence”) whose governments, planners, and aid-donors quest endlessly after the holy grail of (equally mislabeled) “self-reliance.” Here are communities of families as cosmopolitan in their outlook and migration behavior as the Scottish crofters or Irish rural tenants of the nineteenth century, but tied into the straitjacket of postcolonial nationalities in a twentieth-century world of bureaucracy and computerized police files. Here are indigenous cultures whose forms are frozen in the lenses of tourist cameras, even as their content is increasingly contested.

Connell’s discussion is rife with such contradictions but never really brings them into focus. Island peoples, of necessity, learn to play several roles at once, because they have to get on with their lives. Decision makers in the world’s aid and development bureaucracies, in contrast, impose order on the confusion in their own minds by asserting fake imperatives: small-island political institutions “must” attain sovereign status, island economies “must” attain self-reliance, aid money “must” be spent on development projects rather than consumption.

Time after time Connell slips into repeating such nostrums, then recoils in recognition of the realities of the small-island situation, then retreats to the comfort of a sort of confessional question-begging. A typical passage reads: “although self-reliance is an important goal, especially in some sectors, and should remain a target, the prospects for an overall increase in self-reliance are very small indeed. More often self-reliance remains a nominal political objective, the key to the formulation of development plans, but not a genuine economic objective. . . . This kind of structure ensures that there is a major distinction between policy (which is rational and enshrines various technical objectives, which may include greater self-reliance) and politics, which remains the art of the possible” (80–81).

This idea that it is somehow “rational” to pursue objectives that have “very small prospects indeed” gives unwarranted legitimacy to the empty slogans of aid agencies and their consultants. Connell really does know better. His monograph contains a rich vein of source material, together with the fragments of an alternative way of seeing and interpreting the island world. It remains, however, the raw material—not a final product.

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Five Australian academics, four professors or senior lecturers in economics and editor Ken Gannicott, a professor of education whose "main interest is in the economics of education," have produced this set of policy papers. While the studies are about five Pacific Island countries and Australia’s involvement with their education systems, the issues and recommendations have much broader significance, as the authors note in their conclusion of the chapter on Australian aid: "the complex issues that we have discussed bedevil aid programs by most major donor countries in most parts of the developing world" (112).

Each chapter gives a brief history of recent developments in education, examines the current situation in detail, and makes some recommendations for more effective use of funding. As might be expected of economists, the bulk of the data and analysis is quantitative, although the authors acknowledge that the quality of schooling leaves much to be desired and that "development of academic standards to international levels will continue to be difficult" (108). There is also the disclaimer that the "quality of primary and secondary schooling in the South Pacific is so important that it is receiving separate and detailed analysis" (xxi). This separate 1989 analysis, however, is available only in mimeo (119).

The Fiji chapter proposes increasing resources for rural schools to benefit the ethnic Fijians, who are falling behind the Indian Fijians in educational attainment. It also recommends job-based training rather than curriculum changes in the schools to remedy short-term skill shortages.

The chapter on Tonga and Western Samoa begins by noting the similarities in educational development and then contrasts the present policies, with Western Samoa introducing more vocational education and Tonga strengthening traditional academic skills. As with Fijian planners, Western Samoa blames many of the problems of the schools on the persistence of white-collar aspirations of students and parents when those hopes are unrealistic. The pressure of parents for students to enter academic programs has contributed to the shortage of persons with the vocational and technical skills needed in the economies of these nations. The authors point out, however, that "vocationalizing the curriculum is a costly and inefficient way of increasing the value of schooling" (37). They write more positively of the nonformal programs of the Tongan Community Development and Training Centre (46–47). They conclude that Australia can make a "major contribution" by aiding the improvement of "facilities at the lower levels of education in both" countries (50).

The Vanuatu study examines the high cost of schooling there and the need to unify the segregated French- and English-medium schools. The Solomon Islands chapter proposes charging fees for schooling, with graphs to demonstrate that, even with some enrollments discouraged by fees, the number of places for students would be increased with the assistance of funds realized from fees.
In the overview chapter, Gannicott explains that Papua New Guinea was omitted because it warrants separate treatment and because some of the issues have already been explored in Throsby's 1987 volume, Policy Paper no. 3 in this series. The University of the South Pacific is not examined closely because, as a regional institution, it did not fit the "country-specific perspective of the present work" (xxi).

My major reaction to reading this book is not so much a criticism of what the authors have written as an expression of my own concern for the peoples of the Pacific Island nations. The authors have presented exactly what their title claims—studies about education for economic development. My concern is that we of the Western industrialized nations view development as what it has been—and is—for us. Although it is true that an improved standard of living is important for a high quality of life, the two concepts are not synonymous—and quality of life is what education should be about.

Definitions of quality of life by Pacific Islanders are different from those by Americans or Australians. The chapter on Tonga and Western Samoa acknowledges that "the option of return to village life is viewed quite positively" in a setting that has "permitted the maintenance of traditional lifestyles and a comfortable living for all in an environment where climate and soils are benign" (28).

The emphasis on teaching technological and managerial skills implicit in most developmental aid programs funded by the industrial powers is predicated on reproducing economies as similar to those of the donor nations as conditions permit. My fear is that we are creating pools of semi-skilled laborers to be exploited by Western nations. We should not foist upon these peoples an economy that results in their living through the urban sweatshops and dehumanizing mills of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century American cities. Nor should we foster the "exportation" of their youth by schooling them to reject the lifestyle of their society and enticing them to emigrate to the industrial nations where they may still face frustration, defeat, intolerance, and poverty.

I do not imply that the authors are insensitive to the well-being of the people of the Pacific Islands. In their final summation, they write that "it is imperative that the countries themselves be directly involved in project identification, to avoid the suggestion that development strategies are being imposed from outside in accordance with some supposedly superior mode" (114). They also note that "the emphasis on training as the major form of aid has meant that the real problems facing educational development in the South Pacific island countries have not been addressed" (101).

The book has twenty-eight tables of statistical data, five figures (four of which are graphs to illustrate the effect of fee increases on enrollments and one a diagram of the Solomon Islands school system), and four "boxes," which are brief insertions in the first four chapters to put the text into an appropriate context. Since they are placed at the top instead of the foot of the page, they might have been called "headnotes."

There are no maps or photos, nor
is there an index. This last omission is alleviated somewhat by the page formatting; the text occupies only the right hand two-thirds of each page, leaving a broad left margin in which are placed terse summaries of each paragraph or major idea. The three-page list of references is just that—the sources quoted or referred to in the text, with no suggested additional sources or annotations.

For anyone concerned about the policies of donor nations toward "developing" countries, this book not only raises important questions and careful analyses, but it offers some very challenging recommendations.

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This volume contains nineteen of more than forty papers given at the third international symposium of the arts of Oceania held in New York in 1984 by the Pacific Arts Association. "Art and identity" is a catch-all phrase, and, as the editors remark in their introduction, "neither the papers presented at the symposium nor the subset of them represented here can be construed as orbiting closely around any central theme" (1). But the book does reveal a good deal about the current state of research into the visual, as distinct from the performing, arts of Oceania. Interest in such male activities as carving and painting continues at the expense of the female art of weaving. If one excludes white Australians and New Zealanders, only two of the twenty contributors (sixteen of whom are men) are indigenous, emphasizing the degree to which Pacific Islanders are still reluctant to commit themselves to print in this particular milieu.

As in the two previously published symposia (1979 and 1983), the geographic spread of papers indicates continuing interest in Melanesia and Polynesia rather than Australia and Micronesia. There is also a partiality to study a single topic within a particular society, in about half of the papers, one having little or no Western contact. On the other hand, the editors note that other contributions consider the "artistic reflections of rapidly changing values and lifestyles, [and] the self-conscious deployment of art as a tool—even a weapon—in the political struggle of colonized peoples to retain their cultural integrity and to achieve a more just economic and social position" (1).

Single-topic studies set in traditional contexts examine a range of carvings—from the Kominimung (Papua New Guinea), the Asmat, the Sulka (New Britain), and from New Caledonia. They also discuss canoes from the Western Solomons, Nendō Island (Santa Cruz) prehistory, figurative sculpture from the same island, and Vanikoro dance masks. In this group is a fascinating study of Tasmanian bark art, once barely known but today increasingly recognized from nineteenth-century French sources now abundantly available in English.